The Global Incumbency Advantage

Raphaël Descamps Benjamin Marx Vincent Pons Vincent Rollet

Preliminary Version – Please Do Not Circulate

June 2026

Abstract

This paper studies the global incumbency advantage. We first show in a meta-analysis of the existing literature that subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage correlate positively with GDP per capita and democratic quality, and negatively with corruption across countries. 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.

JEL Classifications: D72, O43, P16
Keywords: Incumbency Advantage, Elections, Voting Behavior

Descamps: descampsraphael@gmail.com; Marx: Boston University, CEPR, and NBER (bmarx@bu.edu); Pons: Harvard University, CEPR, and NBER (vpons@hbs.edu); Rollet: MIT (vrollet@mit.edu). Martin Albouy, Livia Haddad, and Gianmarco Torchetti provided stellar research assistance. We thank conference participants at the CEPR Political Economy Symposium, the POLECONUK 8th Annual Conference, the RIDGE-LACEA Political Economy Workshop at the University of the West Indies, the Vitznau Workshop on Political Economics of Representation, and seminar participants at CUNEF, Exeter University, King's College London, LMU Munich, Sciences Po, Stanford University, Texas Tech University, Tilburg University, and UC3M for helpful comments and feedback. All errors are our own.

1 Introduction

In both democracies and autocracies, incumbents often are in a dominant position when competing for reelection and seeking to retain control of political 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 (Cox and Katz, 1996). They may weaken electoral incentives and reduce performance in office, 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. We define this effect as the *total incumbency advantage* (TIA). This conceptualization 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 an 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

[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.

election taking place. We define this effect as the *next-election* or the *conventional incumbency advantage* (CIA). In our cross-country setting, the CIA contributes to the TIA: incumbency effects on subsequent electoral performance constitute one of the mechanisms driving a national 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 96 estimates of the incumbency advantage obtained via regression discontinuity designs across 59 studies and 31 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 among 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 show that the party-level total incumbency advantage at the national level is positive but short-lived. 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 (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 TIA for 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 TIA estimates 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 TIA 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 conventional 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 estimate of the CIA 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 in office. 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 total 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 TIA observed among OECD countries and democratic countries is largely driven by a higher likelihood of winning follow-up elections that are free and fair. By contrast, elections held in autocratic regimes and,

[2] In our heterogeneity analysis, 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.

more generally, elections that are not free and fair yield a sizable incumbency 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 the total 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 TIA 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—i.e., the CIA. 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 planning, 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 describe 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 begin 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 $t+1$.

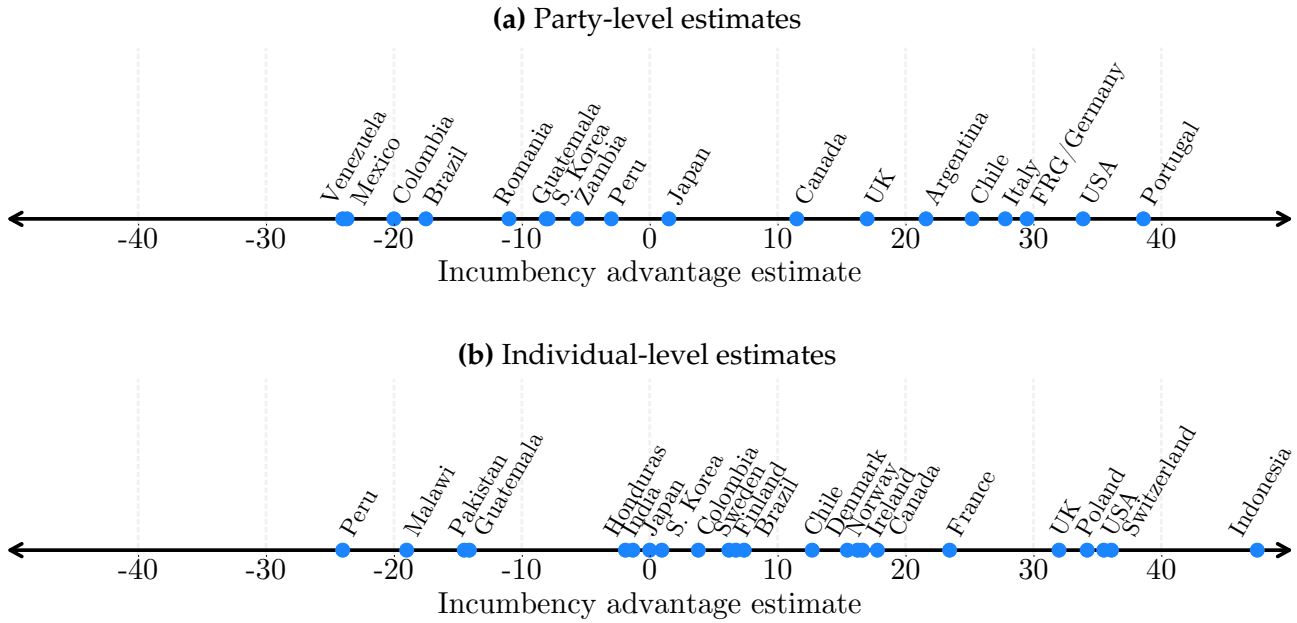
In our meta-analysis, we focus on the effect of winning an election on the probability of winning the next one, instead of other outcomes—such as the probability of running in the next election or the candidate's vote share conditional on running—because these other outcomes are not consistently reported 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 96 estimates from 59 studies, covering a total of 31 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 (38) 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 50 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.

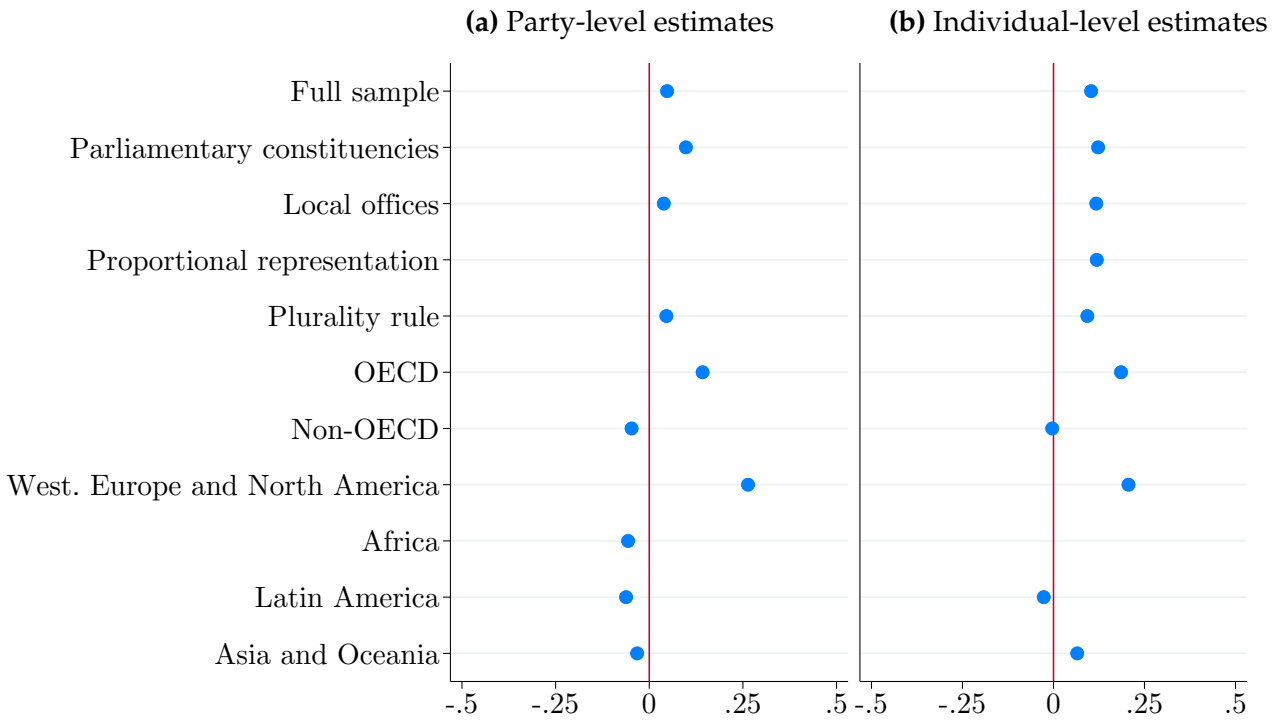
reports estimates at the party level. There is a sharp contrast between OECD countries, in which there is a large positive average incumbency advantage (14 p.p.), and the rest of the world, in which there is an average incumbency disadvantage (-5 p.p.). The incumbency advantage is positive and very large 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. OECD countries display large incumbency advantages, while countries outside the OECD often show an incumbency disadvantage. This suggests that economic development and institutional quality may be important explanatory variables. Previous work identifies several channels through which economic factors might shape incumbency effects.

Based on the literature, we first consider three potential economic determinants of the incumbency advantage: GDP per capita, measured in the Penn World Tables (Feenstra et al., 2015), unemployment, from the International Labour Organization, and income inequality, 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).[4] Corruption is also frequently cited as a source of incumbency disadvantage (Klašnja,

[4]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 larger electoral losses for incumbents. Finally, Roberts (2008) shows that unemployment shapes voters' decision to sanction outgoing governments, in a sample of post-communist European countries where all workers were previously guaranteed employment.

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. For OECD membership, we consider as members the 30 countries that were members of the OECD at the beginning of 2010.

2015): when corruption is widespread, voters may assume that most incumbents are corrupt, creating an anti-incumbent bias.[5] To explore the role of these factors, 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 candidates, 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).

[5] 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).

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.[6]

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,[7] 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 individual-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 0.101).

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 descriptive evidence from Golden and Nazrullaeva (2023), who document a strong positive correlation between legislators' reelection rates and GDP per capita.

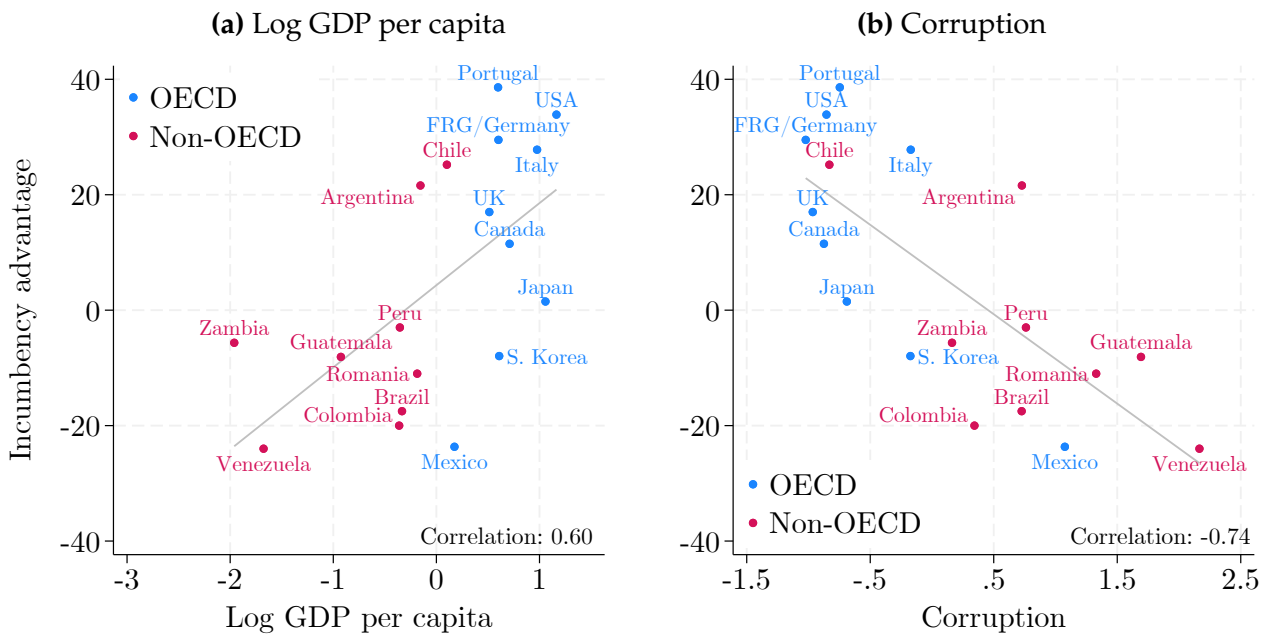
We plot the corresponding figures for the other potential determinants of the party-level advantage in Appendix Figure A.8 and for those of the individual-level advantage in Appendix Figure A.9. The takeaways from these additional results are similar. For example, both the party-level and the individual-level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

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. In fact, we

[6] 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.

[7] For instance, the correlation between a country's log GDP per capita and its corruption level is 0.70.

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.

observe a strong 0.73 correlation between subnational-level estimates of the incumbency advantage and the V-Dem index of democratic quality across countries (see Appendix Figure A.10).

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 incumbents are dishonest and systematically vote against them as a result. Then, elections cease to discipline politicians and incumbents face shorter time horizons in office, providing stronger incentives for them to engage in corruption, 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 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.[8] 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.

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.

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

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 organizational and name changes over time.[9] 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.[10] This conservative rule aims to minimize misclassifications by ensuring that succession links reflect true continuity rather than factional splits.[11] 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 Total incumbency advantage

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. We call this the *conventional incumbency advantage* as this is the object of interest in the literature surveyed in Section 2. However, this approach does not fully capture how winning a national election affects a winner's chances of retaining control of political power over time, 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).

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

[9] 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.

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

[11] 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.

we refer to as the *total 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.[12] Given this definition, the estimates we obtain can be interpreted as a measure of the party-level incumbency advantage at the national level. 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 account for post-election transition periods, outcomes for relative year τ are always measured τ years and 180 days after the date of the election conducted at time t.[13]

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. 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 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, the party of the 2008 election runner-up (John McCain). Therefore, we code the leader in power in relative years $\tau \in [8, 10]$ as aligned with the runner-up. We proceed similarly for $\tau = -1$ and $\tau = -2$ since 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.

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.[14] This definition allows us to identify an election winner in systems where parliamentary elections do not lead to the

[12] 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.

[13] 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.

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

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 $\tau \in [-2, 10]$.

designation of a member of the executive branch, such as the United States.[15] 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.[16] 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.

Total incumbency advantage. Tracking the power trajectories of election winners and runners-up 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 the *total incumbency advantage* (TIA) defined in this way, 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 legal transition periods by measuring outcomes with a lag of 180 days. For instance, the U.S. Constitution 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. Outcomes for $\tilde{\tau} = -1$ and $\tilde{\tau} = 1$ are measured on May 3rd, 2012 and May 3rd, 2014, respectively.

[15] 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.

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

Estimation. 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, the dependent variable $Y_{ic\tau}$ is equal to one if party or candidate c is in power in relative year τ, and zero otherwise.[17] The running variable X_{ict} is the difference between c's vote share and the vote share of the other top-two party or candidate in the case of presidential elections, and between c's seat share and the seat share of the other top-two party in the case of parliamentary elections.[18] This running variable takes positive values for the winning party or candidate ($T_{ict} = 1$) and negative values for the runner-up ($T_{ict} = 0$), and it is symmetric by construction. 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 then estimate the TIA by using as outcome in equation (2) $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}$, a dummy variable equal to one if c is in power $\tilde{\tau}$ years after the end of the term for which the winner was elected. We use the nonparametric method of Calonico et al. (2020) for estimation 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 Conventional incumbency advantage

A key reason why election winners may remain in power after their term has elapsed 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 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* or *conventional incumbency advantage* (CIA), which may be driven by effects on both the probability of running in the

[17] 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.

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

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.[19] 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.[20]

- **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 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 (resp. seat) shares in the subsequent presidential (parliamentary) election, coding the dependent variable as zero if a candidate or party does not run in the subsequent election. Finally, we estimate bounds on the incumbency effect on electoral performance conditional on running, as described in Section 6.1.

[19] 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).

[20] 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.

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. Studies leveraging a close-elections RDD to estimate incumbency effects at the subnational level, which generally consider elections held in democratic settings, 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 by incumbents looms larger in this context. Indeed, our sample includes elections in autocracies, where leaders may rig elections outright.

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, we use exactly two observations for each election: one for the winner, to the right of the threshold, and one for the runner-up, to the left. Their respective running variables have the same absolute value—equal to the difference between the winner's and runner-up's vote share or seat share—but opposite signs: positive for the winner, and negative for the runner-up. The density of the running variable is therefore symmetric by construction (see Appendix Figure E.1).

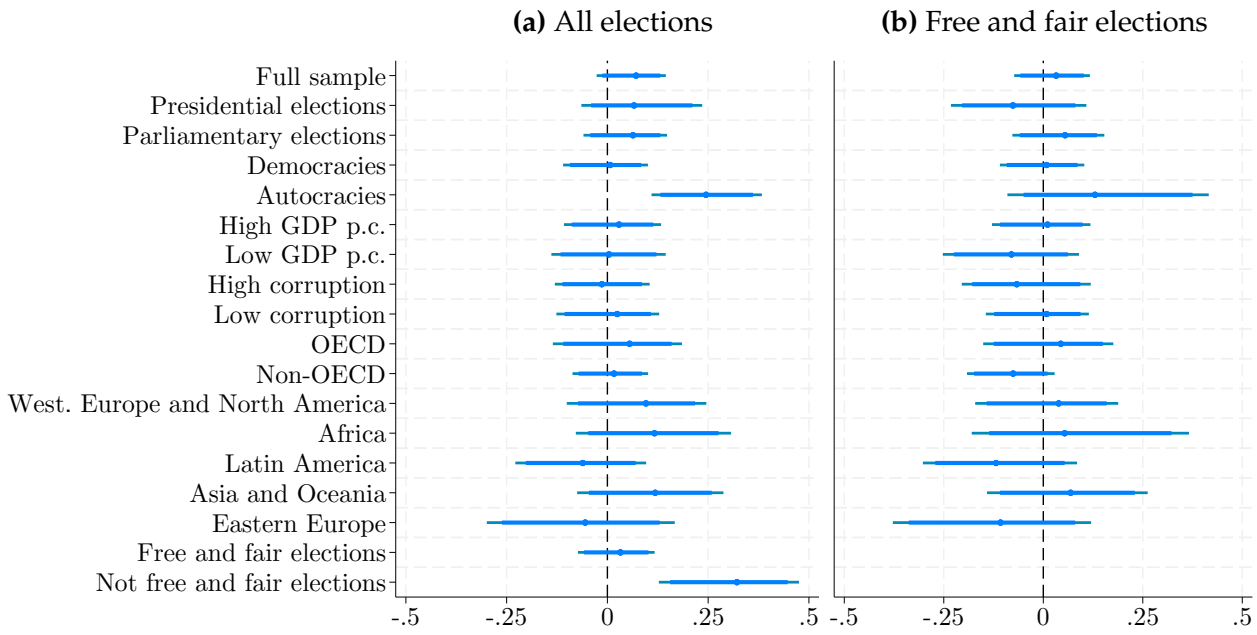
Thus, to test whether incumbents systematically manipulate election results around the threshold, we implement the placebo test described in Section 4.1. Specifically, we examine whether marginally winning an election affects the probability of being in power six months *before* the election, corresponding 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 in two subsamples where we expect some electoral manipulation to have taken place, namely elections classified as not free and fair by V-Dem and those held in autocratic regimes. Appendix Figure E.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).[21]

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: 0.650) or in any subsample. 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

[21] Appendix Figures E.3 and E.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.

use the full sample of elections in our baseline estimation, and show in Appendix F 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.

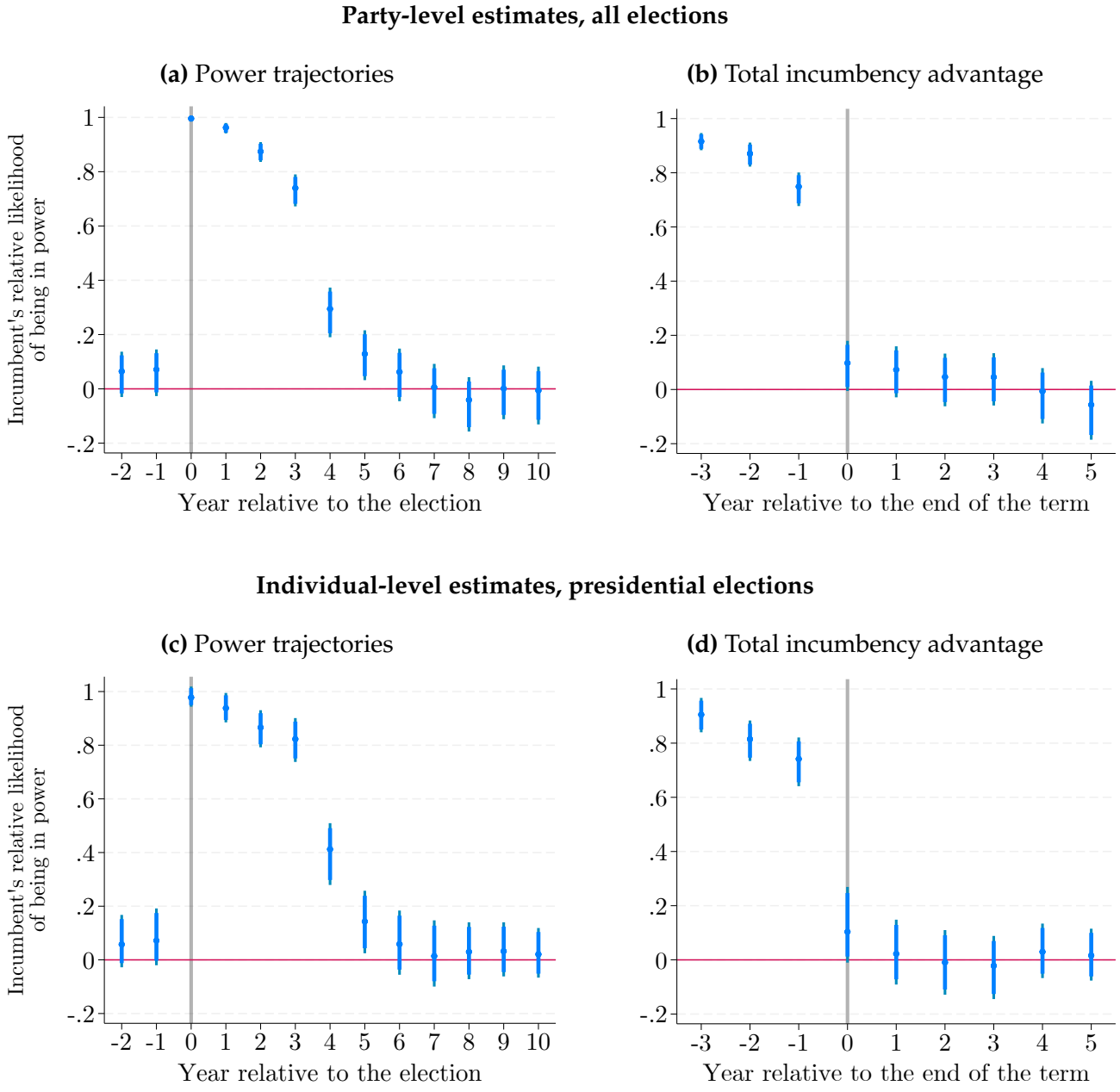
5.2 Estimates of the total incumbency advantage at the national level

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.

In Figure 5(b), we report estimates of the TIA at the national level, defined as 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. For $\tilde{\tau} = 0$, the TIA is positive and significant (p-value: 0.065) at the party level: winning an election increases the likelihood of being in power six months after the theoretical end of the term by

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.

10 p.p., corresponding to a 27% increase relative to the average probability for close runner-up parties. Appendix Figure E.5(a) shows the corresponding RD 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 ($\tilde{\tau} = 1$) and in the two subsequent

years ($\tilde{\tau} = 2$ and $\tilde{\tau} = 3$), 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 TIA in presidential elections.[22] 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 E.1, E.2, E.3, and E.4 report all the estimates shown in Figure 5 for the full sample and various subsamples.

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 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 E.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 E.6 consistently show that the heterogeneous effects observed across subsamples are persistent over an extended timeframe and do not depend on the choice of $\tilde{\tau}$ to measure the TIA.

Mirroring our meta-analysis findings, 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 TIA 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 E.6 and E.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.

Estimates of the party-level TIA in different regions reveal even more striking differences.[23] 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 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 than close runners-up at that point. This disadvantage persists 18 months and 30 months after the election (Appendix Figure E.6). Latin American elections are also associated with an incumbency disadvantage (-10 p.p.), although this estimate is not statistically significant.

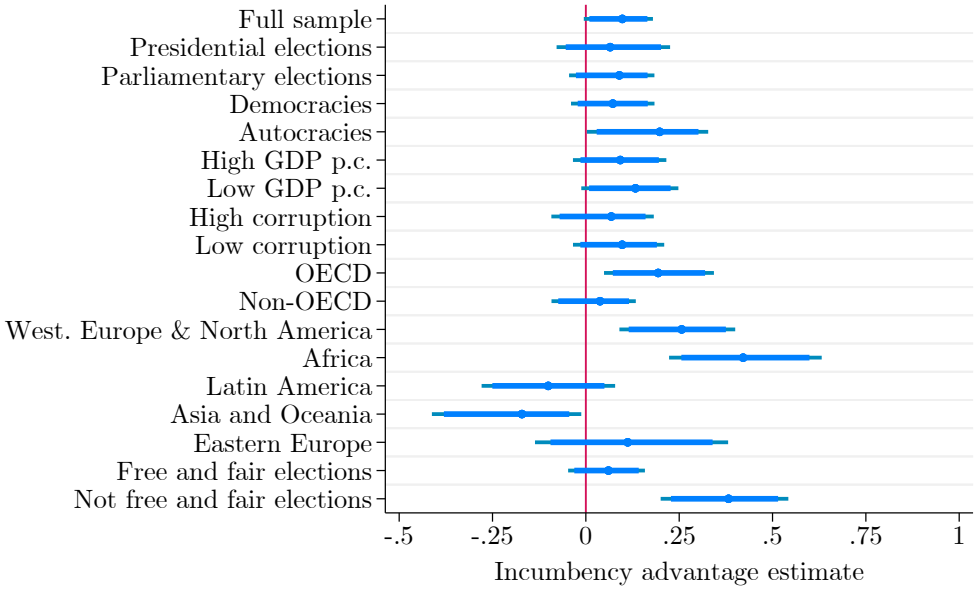
These differences across regions echo those in Section 2. However, in contrast to the incumbency disadvantage found in Africa at the subnational level, this region is the one where we find the largest

[22] 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 15).

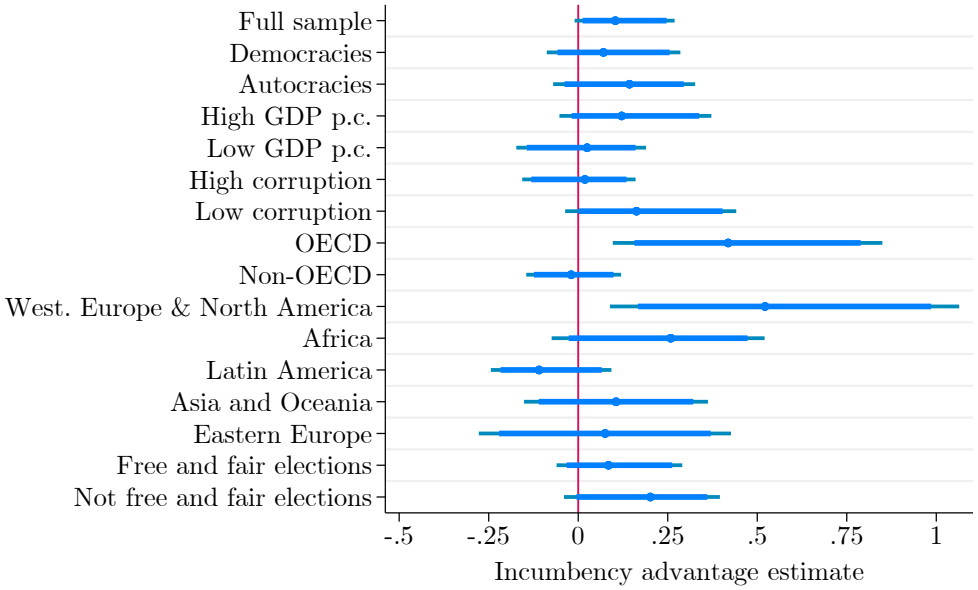
[23] Appendix Figure E.5 shows the regression discontinuity plots separately for elections held in each region, in panels b to f.

Figure 6: Heterogeneity in the total incumbency advantage

(a) Party-level estimates, all elections



(b) Individual-level estimates, presidential 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. 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.

national-level TIA. 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 the 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., non-significant).[24] 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-level TIA paint a much more nuanced picture.

Appendix Figure F.2 shows similar 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 E.8), and including election-year fixed effects in the estimation (Appendix Figure E.9). Appendix Figure E.10 shows that our main estimate for the full sample of elections remains largely unchanged 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 E.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 less precise but largely similar.

Figure 7 reports effects separately for elections held before and after 1990. While the main insights from Figure 6 hold throughout both time periods, the incumbency advantage has generally fallen in magnitude since 1990 in several subsamples. In the regions where the advantage is positive on average (Africa, Western Europe and North America), this advantage has declined slightly over time.[25] In regions where we observe a disadvantage on average (Asia and Oceania, Latin America), this disadvantage has converged towards zero since 1990. At odds with this general trend, the incumbency advantage in autocracies and that in non free and fair elections has become larger after 1990.

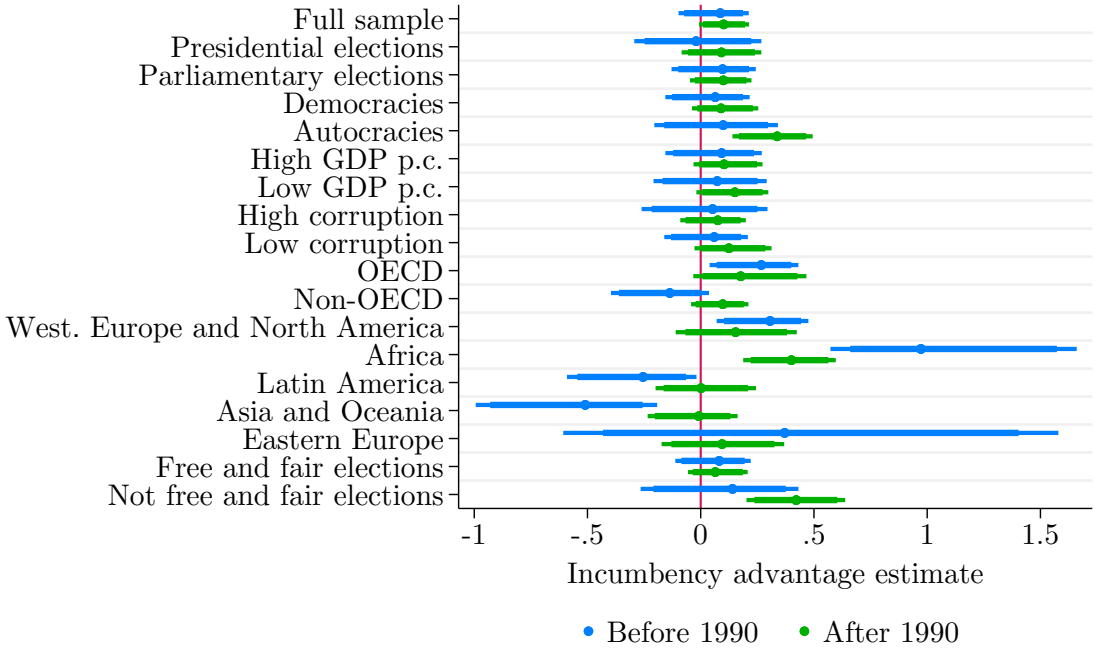
In Appendix Figures E.12(a) and E.12(b), we report party-level estimates of the TIA separately for presidential and parliamentary elections. The large effects observed in OECD countries are primarily driven by presidential elections. For parliamentary elections, the differences between OECD and non-OECD 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 TIA 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.

[24] 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.

[25] This is consistent with evidence from Jacobson (2015) and Guriev et al. (2025) documenting the recent decline of the incumbency advantage in U.S. congressional elections.

Figure 7: Total incumbency advantage before and after 1990



Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the total 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.

6 Mechanisms

Several channels may underlie our estimates of the TIA at the national level. First, winning a national election might influence the likelihood of competing in the next one, as well as electoral performance conditional on running—in free and fair elections, or in elections that are purposefully manipulated by incumbents. Second, national leaders could manipulate the electoral cycle by calling early elections when conditions are favorable to them or by postponing or canceling elections. This section explores these potential mechanisms in turn.

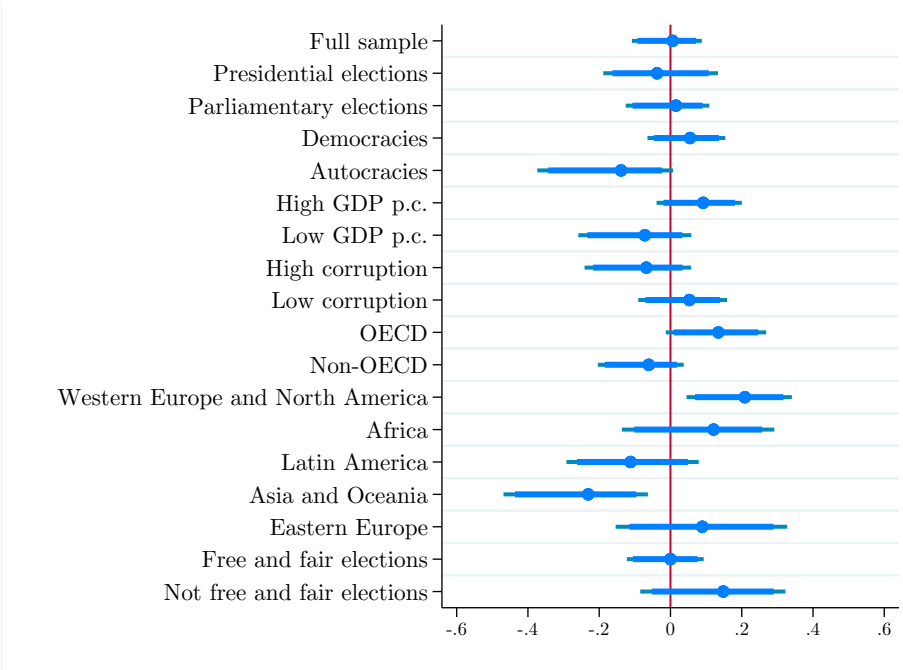
6.1 Conventional incumbency advantage

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

Impact on performance in the next election. We first estimate the national-level CIA, defined as 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 8. The national-level TIA 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.[26]

Figure 8: Conventional 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 heterogeneity in the CIA across 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 across democratic settings, e.g. in 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.[27] 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 E.14 reports estimates of the CIA 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 estimates of the CIA in Figure 8 often mirror those of the TIA 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

[26] Appendix Table E.5 reports the coefficients displayed in Figure 8, as well as the corresponding robust standard errors and p-values. Our results are robust to including election-year fixed effects (see Appendix Figure E.13).

[27] 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.

incumbency disadvantage (-14 p.p.) but a large total incumbency advantage (+20 p.p.).

Impact on competing in the next election. The incumbency effects reported in Figure 8 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).[28] 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. Incumbents may allocate public funds strategically to increase electoral support, direct funds to local political organizations and campaigns, and exert influence over media outlets. They 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 E.15(a). We then separately report unconditional effects on seat (resp. vote) shares in parliamentary (presidential) elections, with seat (vote) shares coded as zero if the party does not run at time $t+1$, in Appendix Figures E.15(b) and E.15(c), respectively. The estimates in Appendix Figure E.15(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 7 p.p. drop in the likelihood of running in the next election (p-value: 0.094). 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 E.15(a) suggest that the CIA is primarily driven by effects on subsequent electoral performance conditional on running.

Impact on performance conditional on running. We also aim to estimate the causal effect of winning the election at time t on the probability of winning the election at time $t+1$ conditional on running. Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) show how to derive bounds on this effect under a no-defier assumption: in their framework, there can be no candidate who runs at $t+1$ under non-incumbency status (i.e., after losing the time t election) but does not run at $t+1$ under incumbency status (i.e., after winning the time t election). This assumption may not hold in our setting given the evidence of large incumbency disadvantages and strategic withdrawals in several subsamples, such as Latin America. In particular,

[28] 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).

some candidates might aim to serve for only a single term and systematically drop out of the $t+1$ election if they have won the t election. For individual-level estimates of the CIA, the existence of one-term presidential term limits might similarly lead to violations of the no-defier assumption.

Thus, we extend the framework of Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) as follows. We define a candidate's potential next-election win outcomes under incumbency and non-incumbency status and conditional on running as W_1 and W_0, respectively. Let $T = 1$ (resp. $T = 0$) denote barely winning (resp. losing) the election at time t; and let $R_1 \in \{0,1\}$ (resp. $R_0 \in \{0,1\}$) denote whether the candidate would run in the next election under $T = 1$ (resp. $T = 0$). Thus, the observed next-election running decision is $R = TR_1 + (1-T)R_0$, and the observed next-election victory is $Y = R[TW_1 + (1-T)W_0]$.

We define the effect of incumbency on performance conditional on running as $\theta = \mathbb{E}[W_1 - W_0 | R_1 = 1]$. In Appendix D, we show that θ is contained in the sharp-identified set:

$$\theta \in \left[\frac{m_1 - \min\{r_1, 1 - r_0 + m_0\}}{r_1}, \frac{m_1 - \max\{0, r_1 + m_0 - 1\}}{r_1} \right] \tag{4}$$

where:

$$r_1 = \mathbb{E}[R_1] = \lim_{x \downarrow 0} \mathbb{E}[R|X = x], \quad r_0 = \mathbb{E}[R_0] = \lim_{x \uparrow 0} \mathbb{E}[R|X = x],$$
$$m_1 = \mathbb{E}[R_1 W_1] = \lim_{x \downarrow 0} \mathbb{E}[Y|X = x], \quad m_0 = \mathbb{E}[R_0 W_0] = \lim_{x \uparrow 0} \mathbb{E}[Y|X = x],$$

all of which can be estimated in the data, with $0 \leq m_0 \leq r_0 \leq 1$ and $0 \leq m_1 \leq r_1 \leq 1$.

Appendix Figure D.1 reports the estimated lower and upper bounds for θ in the full sample and across all subsamples of interest. Overall, we cannot rule out that these conditional effects of incumbency on electoral performance are equal to zero in the full sample of elections and in the subsamples of presidential and parliamentary election considered separately. However, this bounding analysis suggests that the positive CIA observed in highly democratic settings—e.g., in countries with high democratic quality, high GDP per capita, or low corruption, OECD countries, and North American and Western European countries—is largely driven by a positive effect on electoral performance conditional on running. Conversely, there is evidence that incumbency adversely affects electoral performance conditional on running in Asia and Oceania, Latin America, and autocracies.

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 CIA, 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 TIA, if incumbents postpone or cancel follow-up elections outright. Evidence on the relative importance of these mechanisms could, in turn, explain the wedge between total and conventional incumbency 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 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 equal to 1 if party or candidate c in the election held at time t won the next election (held at time $t+1$) and that next election was not free and fair. Our estimates, displayed in Appendix Figure E.16, provide suggestive evidence that the manipulation of the electoral playing field contributes to the CIA in less democratic contexts. Indeed, we find large positive CIA estimates for elections held in autocracies (8 p.p., not significant) and for elections that were already not free and fair at time t (18 p.p., significant at the 5% level).

Manipulation of the electoral schedule. We then explore the extent to which incumbents manipulate the timing of elections. Appendix Figure E.17 examines whether elections take place earlier or later than their constitutionally planned date, across settings with varying 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 moving elections both forward and backward. 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. 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 early elections in the least democratic countries (26%). Countries with intermediate levels of democratic quality are those that most closely follow their constitutional 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 total incumbency advantage

The evidence thus far shows that the TIA estimates in Figure 6 stem from multiple forces: an 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), 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 total incumbency advantage, $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}$, is the sum of these three effects, providing us with a decomposition of the TIA 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 incumbency advantage in elections that are not free and fair.

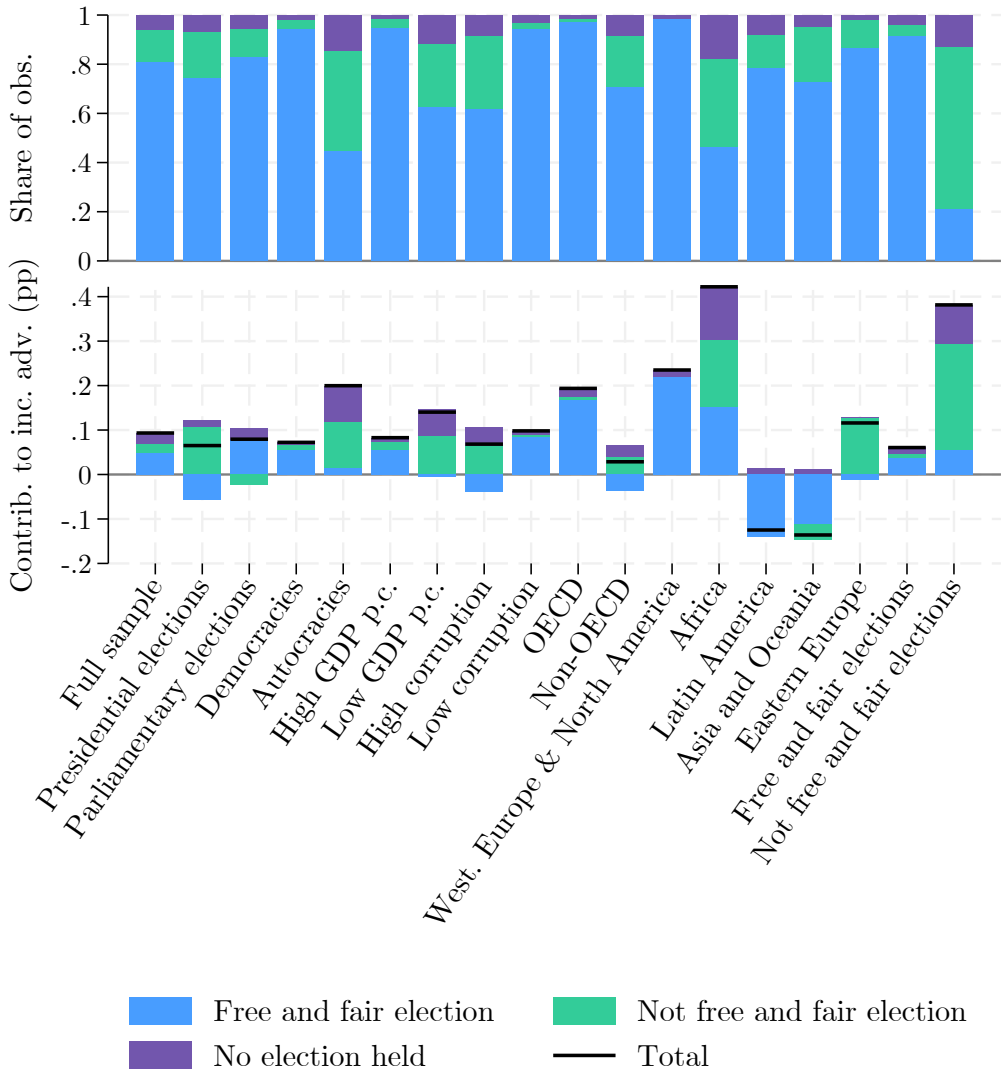
We show the results of this decomposition in Figure 9, where outcomes are measured six months after the end of the constitutionally planned term. We also report the share of elections in the RD bandwidth for which, six months after the scheduled end of term, (i) no subsequent election had been held; (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 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 the TIA in these contexts reflects 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 $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$.

Appendix Figures E.18 and E.19 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 9. The TIA in democratic settings (e.g., the subsamples of democracies, high-income countries, and OECD countries) is driven by a large advantage in free and fair elections, while that in less democratic settings (e.g., the subsamples of autocracies and elections not free and fair at time t) reflects a boost in the performance of incumbents in follow-up elections that are not free and fair.

The evidence in Figure 9 could be partly driven by elections classified as not free and fair at time t. To address this concern, in Appendix Figures F.4 and F.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 9: even when we focus on the winners of free and fair elections, the TIA 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.

Figure 9: Decomposition of the total incumbency advantage



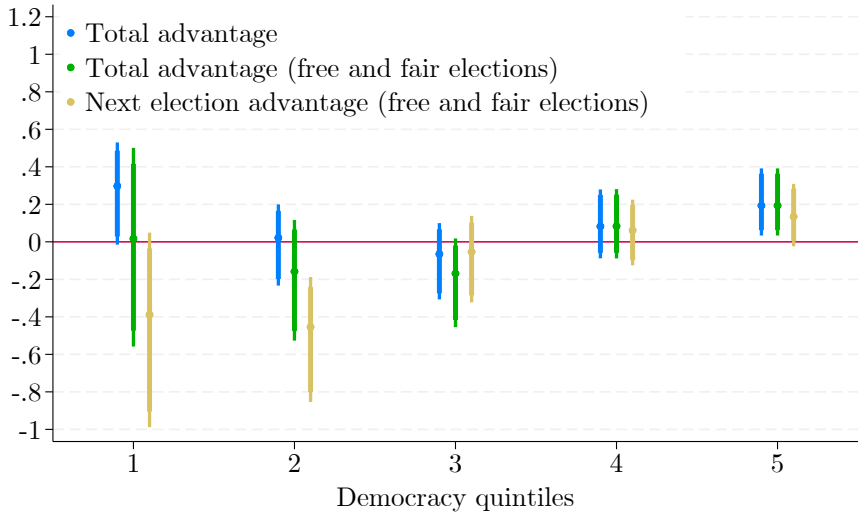
Notes: In the top panel, we report, for our global sample of elections and for various subsamples, the share of elections in the RD bandwidth for which, six months after the constitutionally planned end of the term, (i) no subsequent election had been held; (ii) at least one subsequent election had been 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 the total incumbency advantage as described in Section 6.3. The TIA measured six months after the constitutionally planned end of the term (represented with horizontal black lines) is 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 estimation.

6.4 Democratic quality and the national-level incumbency advantage

Figure 9 helps reconcile our measures of the TIA in national elections with the insights from 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 entirely 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 TIA, $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$, 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 TIA to levels comparable to those observed in strong democratic settings.

Figure 10: 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 total incumbency advantage for the full sample of elections; (2) the total incumbency advantage for the subset of time t elections coded as free and fair by V-Dem; and (3) the next-election or conventional 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.

Figure 10 illustrates the relationship between democratic quality and the incumbency advantage. There, we show three alternative measures of the incumbency advantage for different quintiles of the democracy index: (i) the total incumbency advantage, measured using equation (2); (ii) the total incumbency advantage when restricting the sample to free and fair elections at time t; and (iii) the conventional 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 CIA 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 relationship between democratic quality and the total 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 total incumbency advantage at the national level. In consolidated democracies, national-level incumbency effects primarily operate 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 new 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 in recent decades. The conventional incumbency advantage has also remained stable during this 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.

References

Ade, Florian, Ronny Freier, and Christian Odendahl, "Incumbency Effects in Government and Opposition: Evidence From Germany," *European Journal of Political Economy*, December 2014, *36*, 117–134.

Afzal, Madiha, "Voter Rationality and Politician Incentives: Exploiting Luck in Indian and Pakistani Elections," 2007.

Aguirre, Rodrigo and Matias Brum, "Disentangling the Incumbent's Advantage: New Estimates of Partisan and Candidate Separate Effects," 2023.

Anagol, Santosh and Thomas Fujiwara, "The Runner-Up Effect," *Journal of Political Economy*, 2016, *124* (4), 927–991.

Anderson, Leslie, Michael Lewis-Beck, and Mary Stegmaier, "Post-Socialist Democratization: A Comparative Political Economy Model of the Vote for Hungary and Nicaragua," *Electoral Studies*, 2003, *22* (3), 469–484.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, and Charles Stewart, "Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2000, *44* (1), 17–34.

Archambault, Jerome and Stanley L. Winer, "Political Competitiveness, Regression Discontinuity and the Incumbency Effect," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2023.

Ariga, Kenichi, "Incumbency Disadvantage Under Electoral Rules With Intraparty Competition: Evidence From Japan," *The Journal of Politics*, July 2015, *77* (3), 874–887.

_ , Yusaku Horiuchi, Roland Mansilla, and Michio Umeda, "No Sorting, No Advantage: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Incumbency Advantage in Japan," *Electoral Studies*, September 2016, *43*, 21–31.

Aruoba, S. Borağan, Allan Drazen, and Razvan Vlaicu, "A Structural Model of Electoral Accountability," *International Economic Review*, 2019, *60* (2), 517–545.

Ashworth, Scott, "Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2012, *15* (Volume 15, 2012), 183–201.

Atsusaka, Yuki, Silviya Valeva, and Agustin Vallejo, "The Margin of Victory in Ranked-Choice Voting," July 2024.

Avis, Eric, Claudio Ferraz, Frederico Finan, and Carlos Varjão, "Money and Politics: The Effects of Campaign Spending Limits on Political Entry and Competition," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, October 2022, *14* (4), 167–99.

Ban, Pamela, Elena Llaudet, and James M. Snyder Jr, "Challenger Quality and the Incumbency Advantage," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 2016, *41* (1), 153–179.

Bartnicki, Sławomir, Maciej Alimowski, and Maciej A. Górecki, "The Anomalous Electoral Advantage: Evidence From Over 17,000 Mayoral Candidacies in Poland," *European Journal of Political Economy*, March 2022, *72*, 102109.

Bastos, Paulo and Cristian Sanchez, "The Effects of Educated Leaders on Policy and Politics: Quasi-Experimental Evidence From Brazil," *Latin American Economic Review*, 2024.

Battocchio, Matias, "La Ventaja Del Oficialismo en Las Elecciones Municipales De La Provincia De Buenos Aires," *Económica*, December 2018, pp. 133–171.

Baturo, Alexander and Robert Elgie, *The Politics of Presidential Term Limits*, Oxford University Press, 2019.

Benedetto, Marco Alberto De, "Incumbency Advantage at Municipal Elections in Italy: A Quasi-Experimental Approach," 2014.

_ , "Personal or Partisan Incumbency Advantage? Evidence From an Electoral Reform at the Local Level in Italy," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, December 2019, *20* (1).

Benedictis-Kessner, Justin De, "Off-Cycle and Out of Office: Election Timing and the Incumbency Advantage," *The Journal of Politics*, January 2018, *80* (1), 119–132.

Bernhard, Michael and Ekrem Karakoç, "Moving West or Going South?: Economic Transformation and Institutionalization in Postcommunist Party Systems," *Comparative Politics*, 2011, *44* (1), 1–20.

Besley, Timothy, *Principled Agents? The Political Economy of Good Government*, Oxford University Press Scholarship Online, 2007.

Bonifacio, Carlos Di, Guido Merzoni, and Federico Trombetta, "Incumbency Effect in Competitive Autocracies: Evidence From Venezuela," 2025.

Broockman, David E., "Do Congressional Candidates Have Reverse Coattails? Evidence From a Regression Discontinuity Design," *Political Analysis*, 2009, *17* (4), 418–434.

Calonico, Sebastian, Matias D Cattaneo, and Max H Farrell, "Optimal Bandwidth Choice for Robust Bias-Corrected Inference in Regression Discontinuity Designs," *The Econometrics Journal*, 2020, *23* (2), 192–210.

_ **, Matias D. Cattaneo, and Rocio Titiunik**, "Robust Nonparametric Confidence Intervals for Regression-Discontinuity Designs," *Econometrica*, 2014, *82* (6), 2295–2326.

Carrera, Ivan Morales, "Efecto Incumbente en Elecciones Municipales: Un Análisis De Regresión Discontinua Para Guatemala," *Revista De Análisis Económico*, October 2014, *29* (2), 113–150.

Colomer, Josep, *The Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, Springer, 2016.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi et al., "V-Dem Codebook v11.1," 2021.

Coviello, Decio and Stefano Gagliarducci, "Tenure in Office and Public Procurement," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 2017, *9* (3), 59–105.

Cox, Gary and Jonathan Katz, "Why Did the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections Grow?," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1996, *40* (2), 478–497.

da Fonseca, Mariana Lopes, "Identifying the Source of Incumbency Advantage Through a Constitutional Reform," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2017, *61* (3), 657–670.

Dahlgaard, Jens Olav, "You Just Made It: Individual Incumbency Advantage Under Proportional Representation," *Electoral Studies*, 2016, *44*, 319–328.

Dano, Kevin, Francesco Ferlenga, Vincenzo Galasso, Caroline Le Pennec, and Vincent Pons, "Coordination and Incumbency Advantage in Multi-Party Systems—Evidence From French Elections," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, January 2025.

Dinas, Elias, Pedro Riera, and Nasos Roussias, "Staying in the First League: Parliamentary Representation and the Electoral Success of Small Parties," *Political Science Research and Methods*, 2015, *3* (2), 187–204.

Döring, Holger and Sven Regel, "Party Facts: A Database of Political Parties Worldwide," *Party Politics*, 2019, *25* (2), 97–109.

Duch, Raymond M., "Economic Chaos and the Fragility of Democratic Transition in Former Communist Regimes," *The Journal of Politics*, 1995, *57* (1), 121–158.

_ , "A Developmental Model of Heterogeneous Economic Voting in New Democracies," *American Political Science Review*, 2001, *95* (4), 895–910.

Duggan, John and César Martinelli, "The Political Economy of Dynamic Elections: Accountability, Commitment, and Responsiveness," *Journal of Economic Literature*, September 2017, *55* (3), 916–84.

_ **and** _ , "Electoral Accountability and Responsive Democracy," *The Economic Journal*, 12 2019, *130* (627), 675–715.

Eggers, Andrew C. and Arthur Spirling, "Incumbency Effects and the Strength of Party Preferences: Evidence From Multiparty Elections in the United Kingdom," *The Journal of Politics*, July 2017, *79* (3), 903–920.

Eggers, Andrew C, Anthony Fowler, Jens Hainmueller, Andrew B Hall, and James M Snyder Jr, "On the Validity of the Regression Discontinuity Design for Estimating Electoral Effects: New Evidence From Over 40,000 Close Races," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2015, *59* (1), 259–274.

Egorov, Georgy and Konstantin Sonin, "Incumbency Advantage in Non-Democracies," Working Paper 20519, National Bureau of Economic Research September 2014.

_ **and** _ , "The Political Economics of Non-democracy," *Journal of Economic Literature*, June 2024, *62* (2), 594–636.

Elkins, Zachary and Tom Ginsburg, "Characteristics of National Constitutions, Version 4.0," Technical Report 2022.

Erikson, Robert S. and Rocío Titiunik, "Using Regression Discontinuity to Uncover the Personal Incumbency Advantage," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, May 2015, *10* (1), 101–119.

Fearon, James D, "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance," in Adam Przeworski, Susan C Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 55–97.

Fearon, James D., "Self-Enforcing Democracy," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 11 2011, *126* (4), 1661–1708.

Feenstra, Robert C, Robert Inklaar, and Marcel P Timmer, "The Next Generation of the Penn World Table," *American Economic Review*, 2015, *105* (10), 3150–82.

Feierherd, Germán and Adrián Lucardi, "When the Partisan Becomes Personal: Mayoral Incumbency Effects in Buenos Aires, 1983–2019," *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, October 2023, *33* (4), 684–704.

Ferejohn, John, "Incumbent Performance and Electoral Control," *Public Choice*, 1986, *50* (1/3), 5–25.

Ferejohn, John A., "On the Decline of Competition in Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 1977, *71* (1), 166–176.

Ferreira, Fernando and Joseph Gyourko, "Do Political Parties Matter? Evidence From U.S. Cities," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2009, *124* (1), 399–422.

Filho, George Avelino, Ciro Biderman, and Scott Desposato, "Sources of the Incumbency (Dis)Advantage," *Brazilian Political Science Review*, 2022, *16* (1).

Fiorina, Morris P., "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals: The Bureaucracy Did It," *The American Political Science Review*, 1977, *71* (1), 177–181.

Fiva, Jon H. and Daniel M. Smith, "Political Dynasties and the Incumbency Advantage in Party-Centered Environments," *American Political Science Review*, August 2018, *112* (3), 706–712.

_ **and Helene Lie Røhr**, "Climbing the Ranks: Incumbency Effects in Party-List Systems," *European Economic Review*, January 2018, *101*, 142–156.

Fouirnaies, Alexander and Andrew B. Hall, "The Financial Incumbency Advantage: Causes and Consequences," *The Journal of Politics*, 2014, *76* (3), 711–724.

Fowler, Anthony, "Disentangling the Personal and Partisan Incumbency Advantages: Evidence From Close Elections and Term Limits," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, December 2014, *9* (4), 501–531.

Franklin, Charles H., "Senate Incumbent Visibility over the Election Cycle," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 1993, *18* (2), 271–290.

Freier, Ronny, "The Mayor's Advantage: Causal Evidence on Incumbency Effects in German Mayoral Elections," *European Journal of Political Economy*, December 2015, *40*, 16–30.

Gelman, Andrew and Gary King, "Estimating Incumbency Advantage Without Bias," *American Journal of Political Science*, November 1990, *34* (4), 1142–1164.

Golden, Miriam and Brian Min, "Distributive Politics Around the World," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2013, *16* (Volume 16, 2013), 73–99.

_ **and Eugenia Nazrullaeva**, *The Puzzle of Clientelism: Political Discretion and Elections Around the World*, Cambridge University Press, 2023.

_ **and Lucio Picci**, "Incumbency Effects Under Proportional Representation: Leaders and Backbenchers in the Postwar Italian Chamber of Deputies," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, November 2015, *40* (4), 509–538.

Granzier, Riako, Vincent Pons, and Clemence Tricaud, "Coordination and Bandwagon Effects: How Past Rankings Shape the Behavior of Voters and Candidates," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, October 2023, *15* (4), 177–217.

Guriev, Sergei, Nikita Melnikov, Joana Escorcio Silva, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "Mobile Broadband and the Decline of Incumbency Advantage," 2025.

Hall, Andrew B. and James M. Snyder, "How Much of the Incumbency Advantage Is Due to Scare-Off?," *Political Science Research and Methods*, September 2015, *3* (3), 493–514.

Hicken, Allen, "Clientelism," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2011, *14* (Volume 14, 2011), 289–310.

Hyytinen, Ari, Jaakko Meriläinen, Tuukka Saarimaa, Otto Toivanen, and Janne Tukiainen, "When Does Regression Discontinuity Design Work? Evidence From Random Election Outcomes," *Quantitative Economics*, 2018, *9* (2), 1019–1051.

Jacobson, Gary C., "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections," *The Journal of Politics*, July 2015, *77* (3), 861–873.

Jankowski, Michael and Stefan Müller, "The Incumbency Advantage in Second-Order PR Elections: Evidence From the Irish Context, 1942–2019," *Electoral Studies*, June 2021, *71*, 102331.

Kang, Woo Chang, Won ho Park, and B.K. Song, "The Effect of Incumbency in National and Local Elections: Evidence From South Korea," *Electoral Studies*, December 2018, *56*, 47–60.

Karnik, Ajit, Mala Lalvani, and Manali Phatak, "Political Incumbency Effects in India: A Regional Analysis," *Studies in Economics and Econometrics*, January 2023, *47* (1), 43–60.

Kartik, Navin and Richard Van Weelden, "Reputation Effects and Incumbency (Dis)Advantage," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2019, *14* (2), 131–157.

_ **, Elliot Lipnowski, and Harry Pei**, "Replacement and Reputation," 2025.

Kendall, Chad and Marie Rekkas, "Incumbency Advantages in the Canadian Parliament," *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne d'Économique*, November 2012, *45* (4), 1560–1585.

King, Gary and Andrew Gelman, "Systemic Consequences of Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1991, *35* (1), 110–138.

Klašnja, Marko, "Corruption and the Incumbency Disadvantage: Theory and Evidence," *The Journal of Politics*, October 2015, *77* (4), 928–942.

_ **and Rocío Titiunik**, "The Incumbency Curse: Weak Parties, Term Limits, and Unfulfilled Accountability," *American Political Science Review*, February 2017, *111* (1), 129–148.

Kotakorpi, Kaisa, Panu Poutvaara, and Marko Terviï¿½, "Returns to Office in National and Local Politics: A Bootstrap Method and Evidence From Finland," *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, August 2017, *33* (3), 413–442.

Lee, Alexander, "Incumbency, Parties, and Legislatures: Theory and Evidence From India," *Comparative Politics*, January 2020, *52* (2), 311–331.

Lee, David S., "The Electoral Advantage to Incumbency and Voters' Valuation of Politicians' Experience: A Regression Discontinuity Analysis of Elections to the U.S. House," Working Paper 8441, National Bureau of Economic Research August 2001.

_ , "Randomized Experiments From Non-Random Selection in U.S. House Elections," *Journal of Econometrics*, February 2008, *142* (2), 675–697.

_ **and Thomas Lemieux**, "Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 2010, *48* (2), 281–355.

Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, Penguin Random House, 2019.

Levitt, Steven and Catherine Wolfram, "Decomposing the Sources of Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 1997, *22* (1), 45–60.

Levitt, Steven D., "Using Repeat Challengers to Estimate the Effect of Campaign Spending on Election Outcomes in the U.S. House," *Journal of Political Economy*, 1994, *102* (4), 777–798.

Lewis, Blane D., Hieu T.M. Nguyen, and Adrianus Hendrawan, "Political Accountability and Public Service Delivery in Decentralized Indonesia: Incumbency Advantage and the Performance of Second Term Mayors," *European Journal of Political Economy*, September 2020, *64*, 101910.

Linden, Leigh L, "Are Incumbents Really Advantaged? The Preference for Non-Incumbents in Indian National Elections," 2004.

Lucardi, Adrián and Guillermo Rosas, "Is the Incumbent Curse the Incumbent's Fault? Strategic Behavior and Negative Incumbency Effects in Young Democracies," *Electoral Studies*, December 2016, *44*, 66–75.

Lucas, Jack, "The Size and Sources of Municipal Incumbency Advantage in Canada," *Urban Affairs Review*, March 2021, *57* (2), 373–401.

Luechinger, Simon, Mark Schelker, and Lukas Schmid, "Measuring Closeness in Proportional Representation Systems," *Political Analysis*, 2024, *32* (1), 101–114.

Lührmann, A, N Düpont, M Higashijima, YB Kavasoglu, KL Marquardt, M Bernhard, H Döring, A Hicken, M Laebens, SI Lindberg et al., "Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party) Dataset V1," 2020.

Lundqvist, Heléne, "Is It Worth It? On the Returns to Holding Political Office," 2013.

Macdonald, Bobbie, "Incumbency Disadvantages in African Politics? Regression Discontinuity Evidence From Zambian Elections," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2013.

Magalhaes, Leandro De, Thomaz M. F. Gemignani, and Salomo Hirvonen, "Political Careers in Brazil: The Effect of Winning Vs.Being the Runner-Up," 2025.

Magalhães, Leandro De and Isabel Spirgel-Sinclair, "Could Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Incumbency Effects Help Monitor Parliamentary Elections? Evidence From Malawi.," 2021.

Magalhães, Leandro De and Salomo Hirvonen, "A Second Chance Elsewhere. Estimating the Effect of Winning (Vs. Being the Runner-Up) on Future Electoral Prospects," *Electoral Studies*, June 2023, *83*, 102612.

_ , Dominik Hangartner, Salomo Hirvonen, Jaakko Meriläinen, Nelson A. Ruiz, and Janne Tukiainen, "When Can We Trust Regression Discontinuity Design Estimates From Close Elections? Evidence From Experimental Benchmarks," *Political Analysis*, July 2025, *33* (3), 258–265.

Marx, Benjamin, Vincent Pons, and Vincent Rollet, "Electoral Turnovers," *The Review of Economic Studies*, 11 2024.

_ , _ , and _ , "National Elections Database (Version 2.0)," 2025.

Mayhew, David R., "Incumbency Advantage in U.S. Presidential Elections: The Historical Record," *Political Science Quarterly*, 02 2008, *123* (2), 201–228.

McCrary, Justin, "Manipulation of the Running Variable in the Regression Discontinuity Design: A Density Test," *Journal of Econometrics*, 2008, *142* (2), 698–714.

Miguel, Edward and Farhan Zaidi, "Do Politicians Reward Their Supporters? Regression Discontinuity Evidence From Ghana," 2003.

Munoz, Erico Andres, "Incumbency Advantage, Money, and Campaigns: A Note on Some Suggestive Evidence From Chile," *Economics Bulletin*, 2021, *41* (3), 1203–1211.

Nohlen, Dieter, "Elections in the Americas. A Data Handbook: North America, Central America, and the Caribbean. 2 Vols. Vol. 1," *Elections Worldwide*, 2005.

_ and Philip Stöver, *Elections in Europe*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2010.

_ et al., *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook: South America*, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press on Demand, 2005.

_ , Florian Grotz, and Christof Hartmann, "Elections and Electoral Systems in Asia and the Pacific," *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Volume II: South East Asia, East Asia, and the South Pacific*, 2001, *2*, 1.

_ , _ , and _ , *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Volume I: Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia*, OUP Oxford, 2001.

_ , Michael Krennerich, Bernard Thibaut et al., *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Novaes, Lucas M. and Luis Schiumerini, "Commodity Shocks and Incumbency Effects," *British Journal of Political Science*, October 2022, *52* (4), 1689–1708.

Nzabonimpa, Mélyne, "Gender Differences in Politician Persistence and Incumbency Advantage," *European Journal of Political Economy*, September 2023, *79*, 102404.

Núñez, Lucas, "Do Clientelistic Machines Affect Electoral Outcomes? Mayoral Incumbency as a Proxy for Machine Prowess," *Electoral Studies*, October 2018, *55*, 109–119.

Ochieng'Opalo, Kennedy, "Institutions and Legislative Incumbency Advantage: A Regression Discontinuity Analysis of Legislative Elections in Africa," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014.

Olson, Michael P. and Andrew R. Stone, "The Incumbency Advantage in Judicial Elections: Evidence From Partisan Trial Court Elections in Six U.S. States," *Political Behavior*, December 2023, *45* (4), 1333–1354.

Pacek, Alexander C., "Macroeconomic Conditions and Electoral Politics in East Central Europe," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1994, *38* (3), 723–744.

Pastine, Ivan and Tuvana Pastine, "Incumbency advantage and political campaign spending limits,"

Journal of Public Economics, 2012, *96* (1), 20–32.

Pemstein, Daniel, Kyle L Marquardt, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi ting Wang, Joshua Krusell, and Farhad Miri, "The V-Dem Measurement Model: Latent Variable Analysis for Cross-National and Cross-Temporal Expert-Coded Data," *V-Dem Working Paper*, 2018, *21*.

Powell, Jonathan M and Clayton L Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups From 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, 2011, *48* (2), 249–259.

Przeworski, Adam, S Newman, SK Park, Didac Queralt, Gonzalo Rivero, and Kong Joo Shin, "Political Institutions and Political Events (PIPE) Data Set," *Department of Politics, New York University*, 2013.

Redmond, Paul and John Regan, "Incumbency Advantage in a Proportional Electoral System: A Regression Discontinuity Analysis of Irish Elections," *European Journal of Political Economy*, June 2015, *38*, 244–256.

Roberts, Andrew, "Hyperaccountability: Economic Voting in Central and Eastern Europe," *Electoral Studies*, 2008, *27* (3), 533–546.

Roh, Jungho, "The Incumbency Disadvantage in South Korean National Assembly Elections: Evidence From a Regression Discontinuity Approach," *Electoral Studies*, April 2017, *46*, 112–122.

Salas, Christian, "Incumbency Advantage in Multi-Member Districts: Evidence From Congressional Elections in Chile," *Electoral Studies*, June 2016, *42*, 213–221.

Schiumerini, Luis and María Page, "El Efecto "Cancha Inclinada": Ventajas Del Oficialismo en La Política De Las Provincias Argentinas," 2012.

Sevi, Semra, "Is Incumbency Advantage Gendered?," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, February 2023, *48* (1), 145–163.

_ , "The Incumbency Advantage in Canadian Elections," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, June 2025, pp. 1–11.

Svolik, Milan W., "Learning to Love Democracy: Electoral Accountability and the Success of Democracy," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2013, *57* (3), 685–702.

Titiunik, Rocıo, "Incumbency Advantage in Brazil: Evidence From Municipal Mayor Elections," 2009.

Trounstine, Jessica, "Evidence of a Local Incumbency Advantage," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, May 2011, *36* (2), 255–280.

Uppal, Yogesh, "The Disadvantaged Incumbents: Estimating Incumbency Effects in Indian State Legislatures," *Public Choice*, January 2009, *138* (1-2), 9–27.

_ , "Estimating Incumbency Effects in U.S. State Legislatures: A Quasi-Experimental Study," *Economics & Politics*, July 2010, *22* (2), 180–199.

Warshaw, Christopher, "Local Elections and Representation in the United States," *Annual Review of Political Science*, May 2019, *22* (1), 461–479.

Weaver, Julie Anne, "Electoral Dis-Connection: The Limits of Reelection in Contexts of Weak Accountability," *The Journal of Politics*, October 2021, *83* (4), 1462–1477.

Weiler, Johannes, "Once Mayor, Always Mayor? Incumbency Advantage of Austrian Mayors," 2021.

Weingast, Barry R., Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Christopher Johnsen, "The Political Economy of Benefits and Costs: A Neoclassical Approach to Distributive Politics," *Journal of Political Economy*, 1981, *89* (4), 642–664.

Zoorob, Michael, "There's (Rarely) a New Sheriff in Town: The Incumbency Advantage for Local Law Enforcement," *Electoral Studies*, December 2022, *80*, 102550.

Appendix

A Meta-analysis **41**
A.1 Methodology . . . 41
A.2 Additional results . . . 43

B Data Construction **53**
B.1 Leaders and candidates . . . 53
B.2 Political parties . . . 53
B.3 Regimes . . . 54
B.4 Constitutionally planned length of terms . . . 54
B.4.1 Presidential elections . . . 54
B.4.2 Parliamentary elections . . . 54
B.5 Coalitions . . . 55
B.6 Building outcomes . . . 55
B.6.1 Total incumbency advantage . . . 55
B.6.2 Next election incumbency advantage . . . 56
B.7 Data quality checks . . . 56

C Empirical Strategy **56**
C.1 Elections included in the sample . . . 56
C.2 Transition period . . . 58

D Incumbency Effects Conditional on Running **59**

E Additional Results and Robustness Checks **63**

F Robustness to restricting the sample to free and fair elections **87**

List of Figures

A.1 Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage . . . 43
A.2 Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage . . . 43
A.3 Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage, unweighted . . . 44
A.4 Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage, with weights proportional to the inverse standard errors . . . 44
A.5 Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage, unweighted . . . 45
A.6 Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage, with weights proportional to the inverse standard error . . . 45
A.7 Correlates of the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level . . . 46

A.8 Additional correlates of the party-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level . 47
A.9 Additional correlates of the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level 48
A.10 Subnational incumbency advantage and democratic quality 49
D.1 Bounds for incumbency effects conditional on running 62
E.1 Density of the running variable 63
E.2 Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power one year and six months before the election 64
E.3 Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power before the election, presidential candidates 65
E.4 Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power one year and six months before the election, presidential candidates 66
E.5 Total incumbency advantage, RD plots 67
E.6 Incumbency advantage on the likelihood of being in power 18 and 30 months after the scheduled end of term 72
E.7 Total incumbency advantage, by subsample 73
E.8 Total incumbency advantage, restricted sample of countries 74
E.9 Total incumbency advantage, with election-year fixed effects 75
E.10 Total incumbency advantage, alternative fixed effects 76
E.11 Robustness to bandwidth selection 77
E.12 Total incumbency advantage, presidential vs. parliamentary elections 78
E.13 CIA estimation with election-year fixed effects 80
E.14 Individual-level CIA estimates in presidential elections 81
E.15 Incumbency effects on running and unconditional performance in the next election 82
E.16 CIA in non free and fair elections 83
E.17 Timing of subsequent elections by democracy quintile 84
E.18 TIA decomposition 18 months after the scheduled end of term 85
E.19 TIA Decomposition 30 months after the scheduled end of term 86
F.1 Density of the running variable, free and fair elections 87
F.2 Total incumbency advantage in free and fair elections 88
F.3 CIA estimates in free and fair elections 99
F.4 TIA decomposition, free and fair elections 100
F.5 TIA decomposition, elections following a free and fair election 101

List of Tables

A.1 Studies included in the meta-analysis 50
E.1 Party-level power trajectories coefficients 68
E.2 Party-level TIA coefficients 69
E.3 Individual-level power trajectories coefficients 70
E.4 Individual-level TIA coefficients 71

E.5 Party-level CIA estimates 79
F.1 Party-level power trajectories coefficients, free and fair elections 89
F.2 Party-level TIA coefficients, free and fair elections 90
F.3 Individual-level power trajectories coefficients, free and fair elections 91
F.4 Individual-level TIA coefficients, free and fair elections 92
F.5 Party-level power trajectories coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election . . 93
F.6 Party-level TIA coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election 94
F.7 Individual-level power trajectories coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election 95
F.8 Individual-level TIA coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election 96
F.9 Party-level CIA estimates, free and fair elections 97
F.10 Party-level CIA estimates, elections following free and fair elections 98

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]

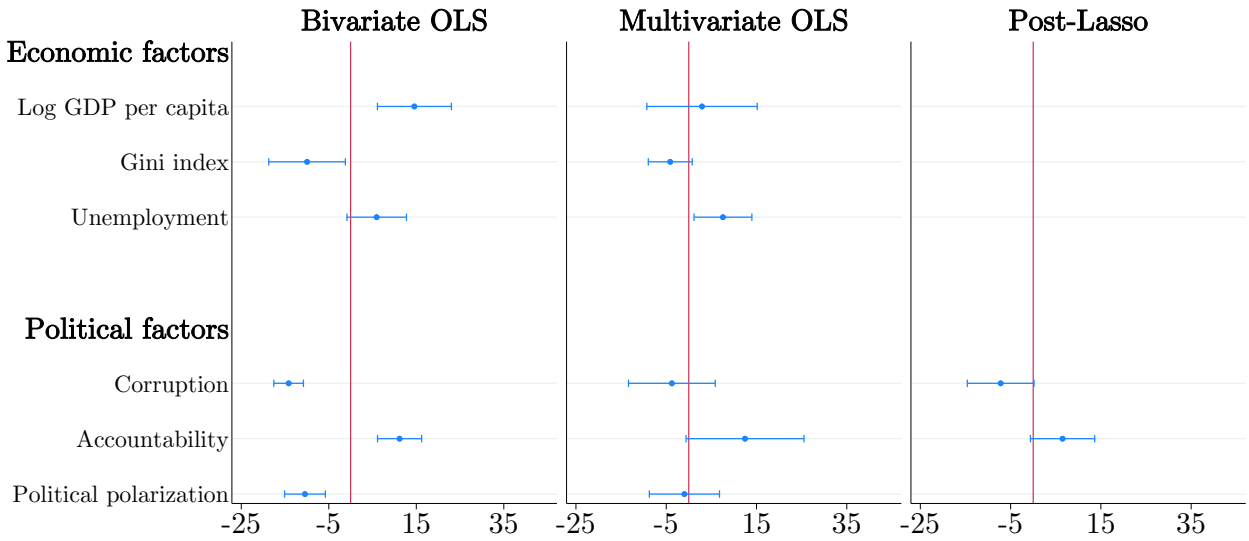
Analysis sample. The full dataset includes 119 estimates of the incumbency advantage, extracted from 65 articles. Most estimates (96) provide unconditional measures of the incumbency advantage, while the remaining are conditional on the candidate or party running again. We only include the former in our analysis as they constitute the broadest measure of the incumbency advantage.

[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.

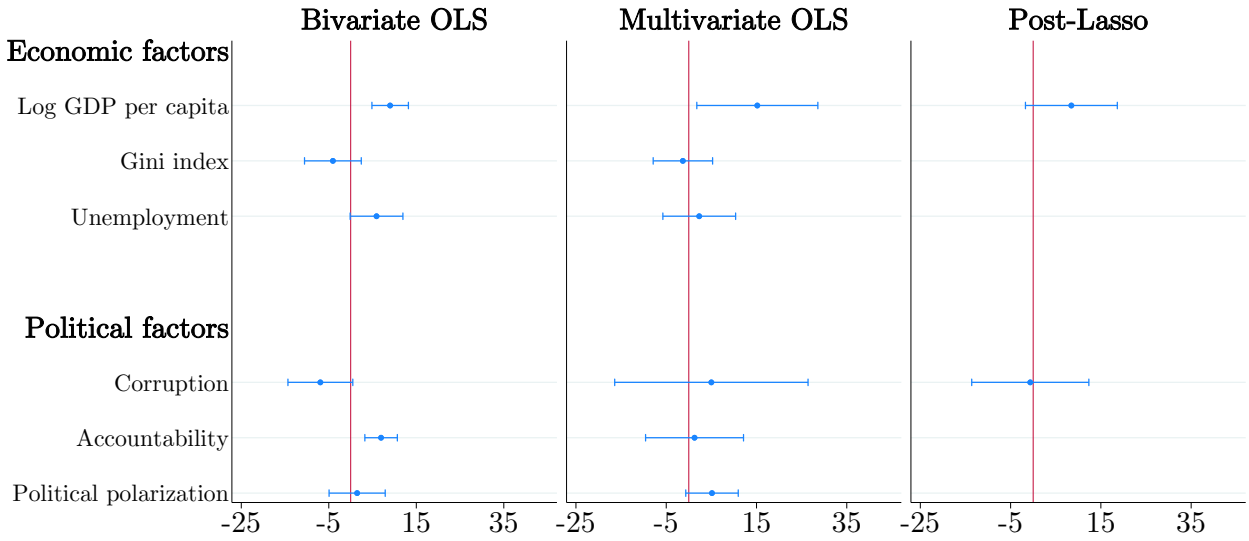
A.2 Additional results

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



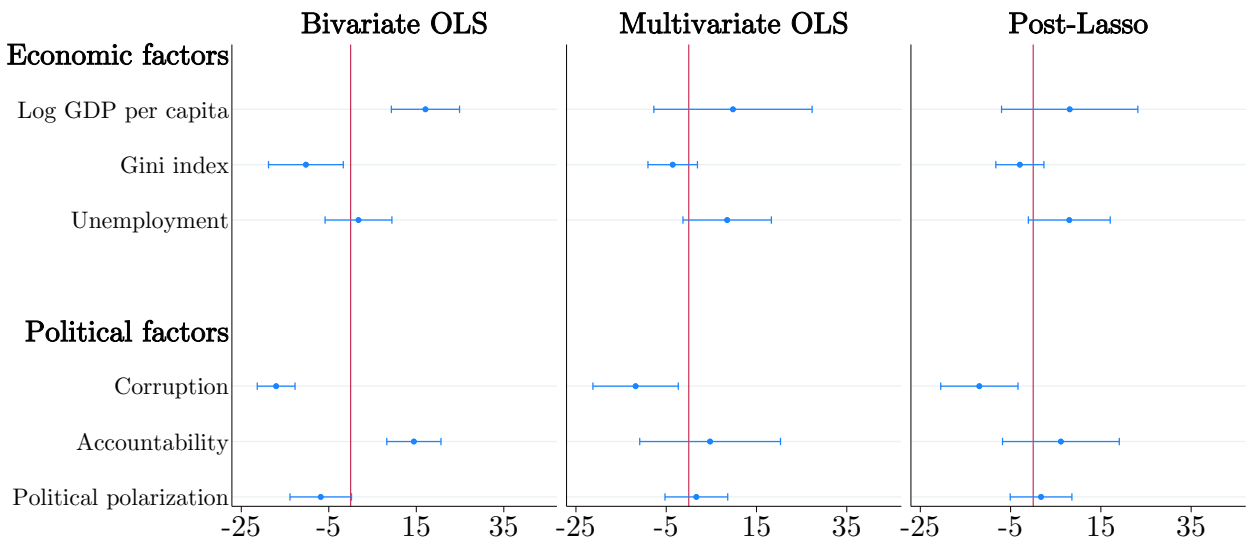
Notes: This figure reports estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals from regressions of party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage at the subnational level on covariates. The left panel reports results from bivariate OLS regressions (each estimate corresponds to a separate regression). The middle panel reports results from a multivariate regression ($R^2 = 0.72$) 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



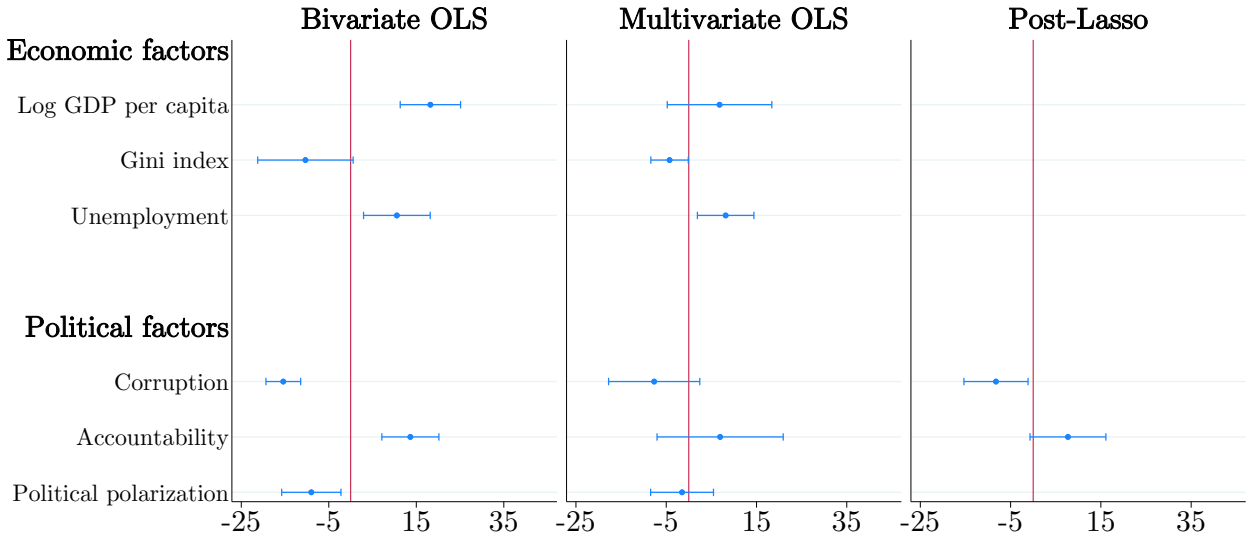
Notes: This figure reports the results of the exercise conducted in Appendix Figure A.1 for the individual-level incumbency advantage instead of the party-level incumbency advantage. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.43$.

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



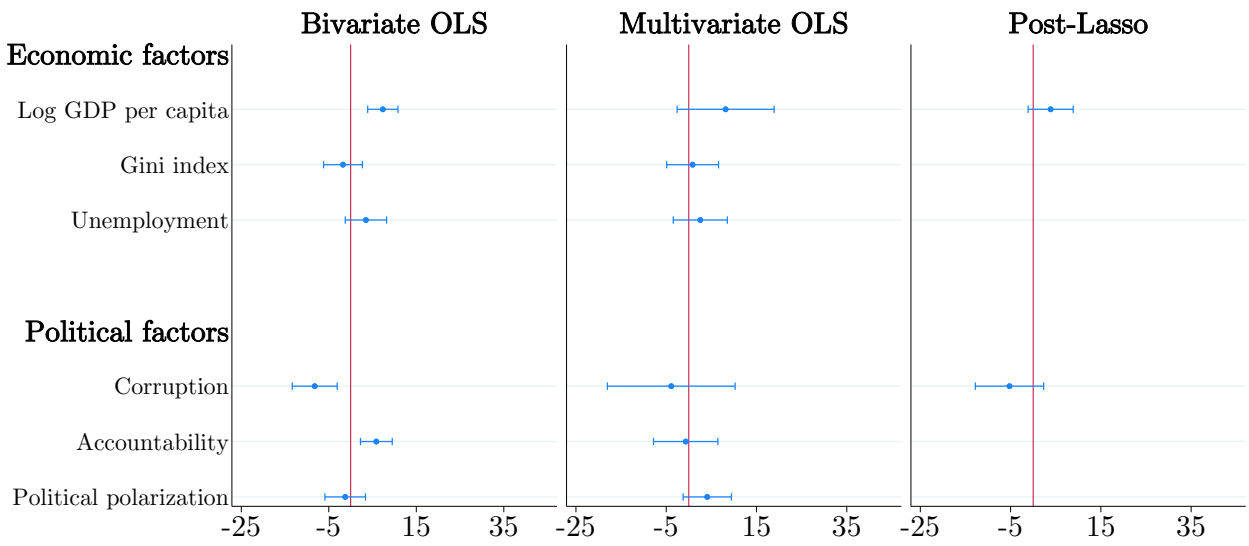
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.1, but without weights. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.61$.

Figure A.4: Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage, with weights proportional to the inverse standard errors



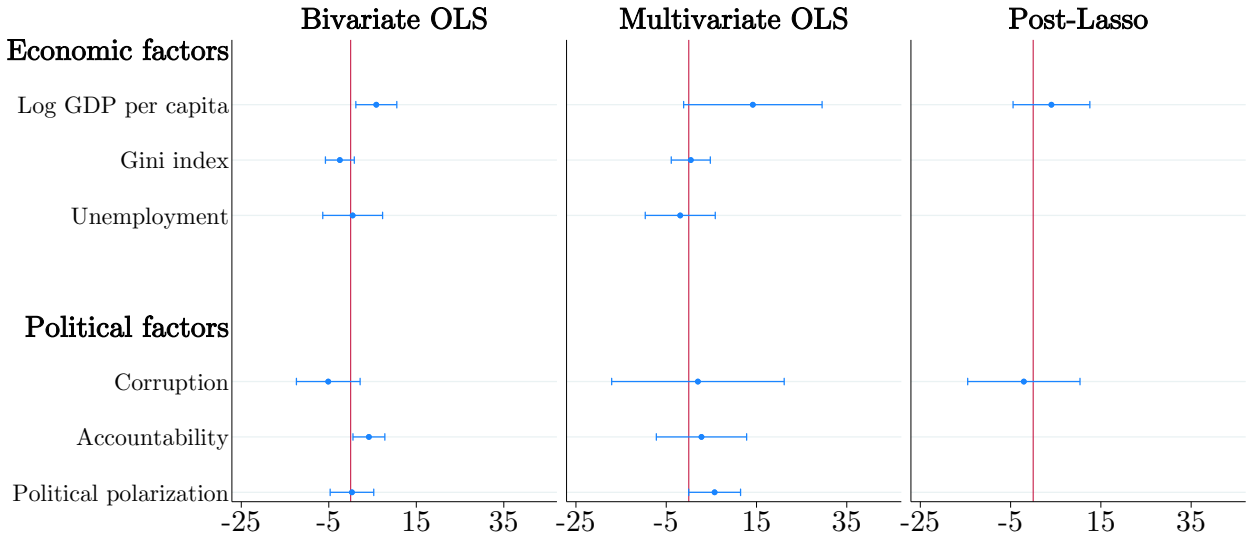
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.1, but with weights proportional to the inverse of the standard errors reported in each study. When a standard error was not reported, we used the average standard error from the other studies. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.80$.

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



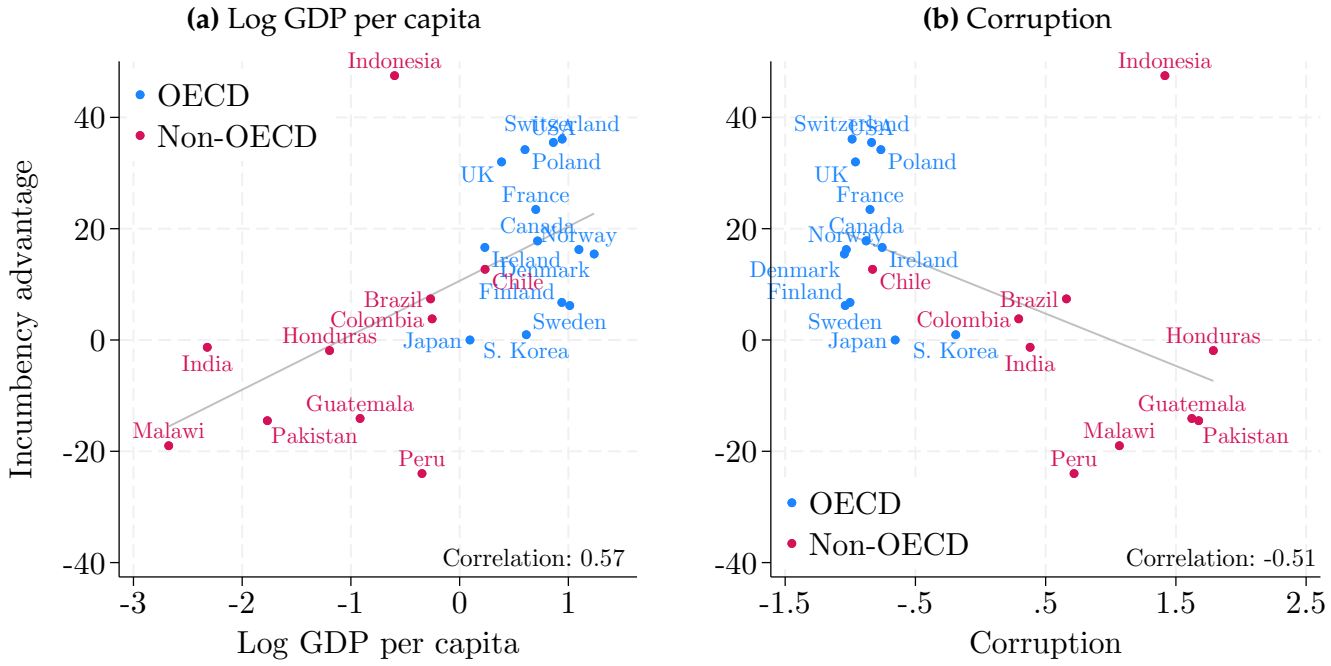
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.2, but without weights. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.32$.

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



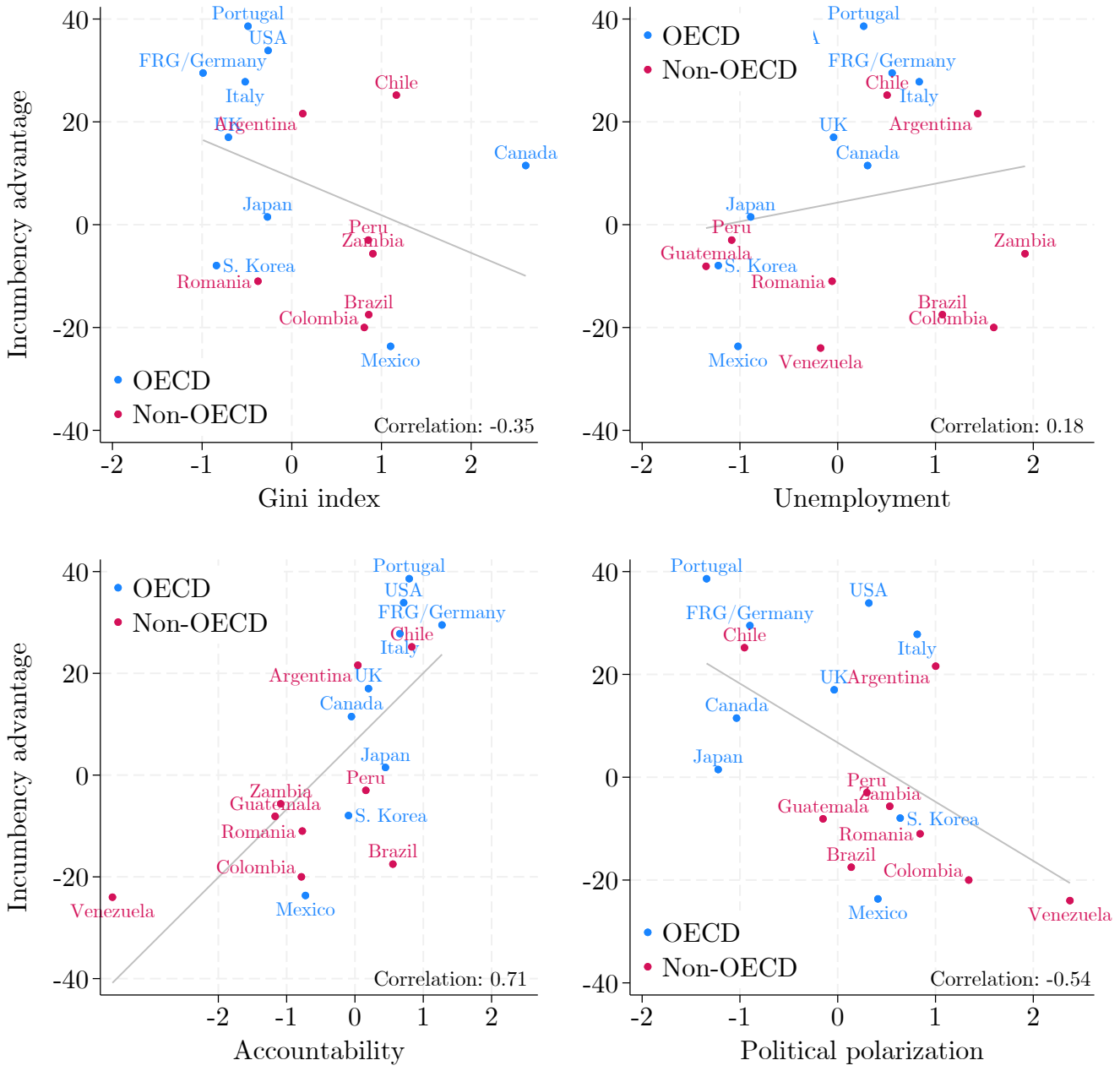
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.2, but with weights proportional to the inverse of the standard errors reported in each study. When a standard error was not reported, we used the average standard error from the other studies. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.35$.

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



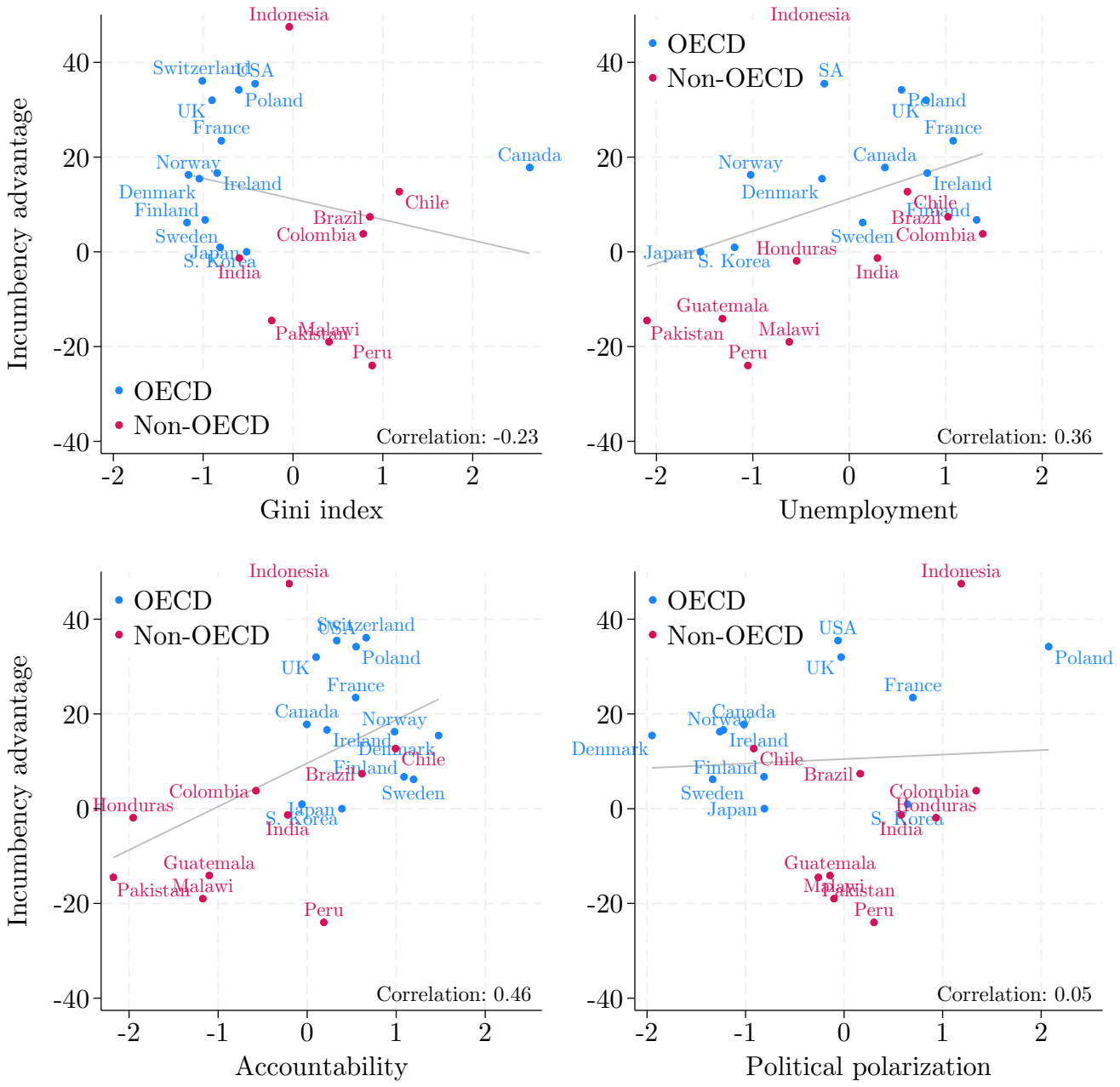
Notes: This figure compares the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level to log GDP per capita (as measured by the Penn World Tables) and corruption (as measured by V-Dem), both standardized. Each dot corresponds to the average estimate of the incumbency advantage reported for a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

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



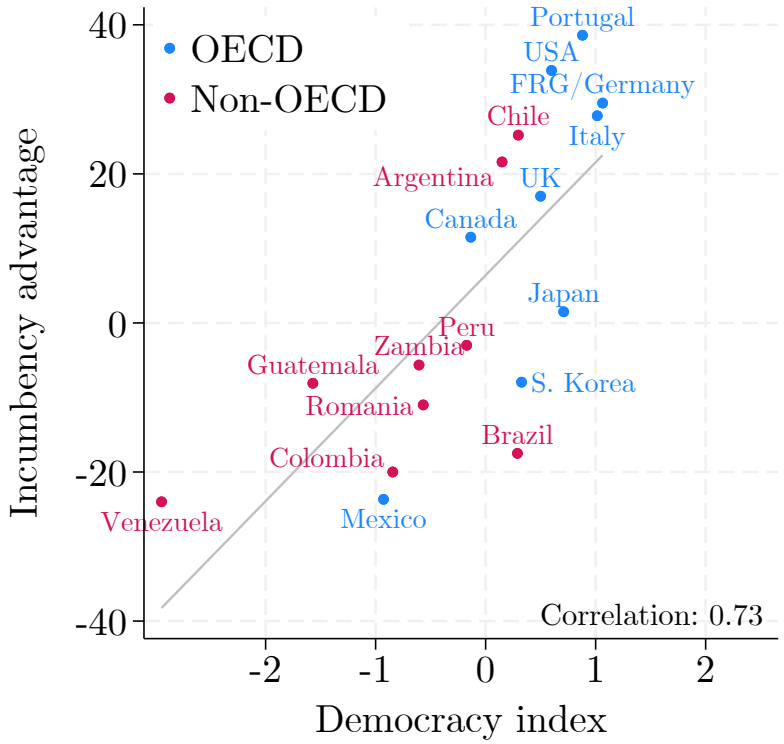
Notes: Each plot compares the party-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level to a covariate, expressed in standard deviation terms. We report Pearson correlation coefficients. Estimates are pooled by country.

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.

Figure A.10: Subnational incumbency advantage and democratic quality



Notes: This figure compares estimates of the subnational party-level incumbency advantage to the V-Dem index of democratic quality. Each coefficient in our meta-analysis is associated with the average level of democratic quality in the country and time period of study. We then report the average estimate 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	+
Avelino Filho et al. (2022)	Brazil	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1998-2019	No	+
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1998-2010	No	+
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2000-2008	No	N
Bastos and Sanchez (2024)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2000-2008	No	N
Novaes and Schiumerini (2022)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2004-2016	No	-
Titiunik (2009)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2000-2004	No	-
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1996-2012	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
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	-
Sevi (2025)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1867-1972	Yes	+
Sevi (2023)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1990-2021	Yes	N
Sevi (2025)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1972-2021	Yes	N
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	Yes	+
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Denmark	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2005-2014	No	+
Dahlgaard (2016)	Denmark	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2005-2013	No	+
Ade et al. (2014)	FRG/Germany	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1976-1990	No	+
Ade et al. (2014)	FRG/Germany	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1990-2005	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
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	+
Kotakorpi et al. (2017)	Finland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1996-2008	No	N
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	-

Luechinger et al. (2024)	Honduras	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	2009-2017	No	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1951-1967	No	+
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-1999	Yes	-
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1977-2014	No	N
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-1999	No	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1980-1989	No	+
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1980-1989	Yes	N
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1977-2014	Yes	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1951-1967	Yes	+
Karnik et al. (2023)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1980-2014	Yes	N
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1977-2014	Yes	+
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2003	No	-
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1975-1991	Yes	-
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1975-1991	No	N
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2003	Yes	-
Lewis et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2005-2017	No	+
Redmond and Regan (2015)	Ireland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1937-2011	No	+
Jankowski and Müller (2021)	Ireland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1937-2020	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 (2019)	Italy	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1993-2011	No	+
De Benedetto (2014)	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
Roh (2017)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2012	No	-
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	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	Candidates	1988-2014	No	+
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2014	No	N
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2014	No	+
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
Lucardi and Rosas (2016)	Mexico	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2000-2015	No	-
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Mexico	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1997-2009	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	Yes	-
Weaver (2021)	Peru	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2006-2014	No	-
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	+
Luechinger et al. (2024)	Switzerland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1931-2015	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	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	2006-2018	No	+
Lee (2008)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1946-1998	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	2020-2024	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1976-2004	No	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1948-2010	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	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1970-2010	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Fowler (2014)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1996-2008	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	N
Ferreira and Gyourko (2009)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1950-2005	No	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1978-2010	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	1970-1991	Yes	N
Ochieng'Opalo (2014)	Zambia	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2013	Yes	+
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 their party affiliation when 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 Colomer (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 Total 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 conventional 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 Incumbency Effects Conditional on Running

Estimand. We aim to estimate the causal effect of barely winning election t on the probability of winning election $t+1$ conditional on running, for the subsample of candidates that would run in the next election if they barely won at t:

$$\theta = \mathbb{E}[W_1 - W_0 \mid R_1 = 1] = \mathbb{E}[W_1 \mid R_1 = 1] - \mathbb{E}[W_0 \mid R_1 = 1].$$

For this conditional estimand to be well-defined, we assume throughout that $r_1 > 0$.

The first component of this estimand is identified:

$$\mathbb{E}[W_1 \mid R_1 = 1] = \frac{\mathbb{E}[R_1 W_1]}{\mathbb{E}[R_1]} = \frac{m_1}{r_1},$$

but the second is not:

$$\mathbb{E}[W_0 \mid R_1 = 1] = \frac{\mathbb{E}[R_1 W_0]}{r_1}.$$

Indeed, the numerator $q_0 = \mathbb{E}[R_1 W_0] = \Pr(R_1 = 1,\ W_0 = 1)$ is the unobserved mass of candidates who would run under incumbency and win as non-incumbents. We aim to obtain the sharp identified set for q_0 in order to bound the estimand

$$\theta = \frac{m_1 - q_0}{r_1}.$$

Bounds. The sharp identified set for θ is

$$\theta \in \left[\frac{m_1 - \min\{r_1,\, 1 - r_0 + m_0\}}{r_1},\ \frac{m_1 - \max\{0,\, r_1 + m_0 - 1\}}{r_1} \right].$$

Indeed, let

$$A = \{R_1 = 1\}, \qquad B = \{R_0 = 1\}.$$

The data identify $\Pr(A) = r_1$, $\Pr(B) = r_0$, and $\mathbb{E}[W_0 \mathbf{1}\{B\}] = m_0$. Since $0 \le W_0 \le 1$,

$$m_0 = \mathbb{E}[R_0 W_0] \le \mathbb{E}[W_0] = \mathbb{E}[R_1 W_0] + \mathbb{E}[(1 - R_1) W_0] \le q_0 + (1 - r_1).$$

Therefore

$$q_0 \ge m_0 - (1 - r_1) = r_1 + m_0 - 1.$$

Together with $q_0 \ge 0$, this gives

$$q_0 \ge \max\{0, r_1 + m_0 - 1\}.$$

For the upper bound,

$$q_0 \le \mathbb{E}[W_0] = \mathbb{E}[R_0 W_0] + \mathbb{E}[(1 - R_0) W_0] \le m_0 + (1 - r_0).$$

Also $q_0 \le \mathbb{E}[R_1] = r_1$. Hence

$$q_0 \le \min\{r_1, 1 - r_0 + m_0\}.$$

Thus

$$q_0 \in [\max\{0, r_1 + m_0 - 1\}, \min\{r_1, 1 - r_0 + m_0\}].$$

It remains to show that these bounds are sharp. Let

$$\underline{q}_0 = \max\{0, r_1 + m_0 - 1\}, \qquad \overline{q}_0 = \min\{r_1, m_0 + 1 - r_0\}.$$

We show that every $q \in [\underline{q}_0, \overline{q}_0]$ can be attained.

Let the cutoff population be the unit interval with uniform probability measure. Fix any $q \in [\underline{q}_0, \overline{q}_0]$. Let

$$c = \max\{m_0, q\}.$$

Because $q \leq \overline{q}_0 \leq m_0 + 1 - r_0$, we have

$$c \leq m_0 + 1 - r_0.$$

Because $q \geq \underline{q}_0 \geq r_1 + m_0 - 1$ whenever the latter term is positive, we also have

$$c \leq q + 1 - r_1.$$

Moreover, by construction, $q \leq c$.

Choose a set B with probability r_0. Choose a subset $C_B \subseteq B$ with probability m_0. This is possible because $m_0 \leq r_0$. Choose a subset $C_N \subseteq B^c$ with probability $c - m_0$. This is possible because $c - m_0 \leq 1 - r_0$. Define

$$C = C_B \cup C_N, \qquad W_0 = \mathbf{1}\{C\}.$$

Then

$$\Pr(B) = r_0, \qquad \int_B W_0 \, dP = \Pr(B \cap C) = m_0.$$

Now choose a set A with probability r_1 such that

$$\Pr(A \cap C) = q.$$

This is possible because $q \leq c = \Pr(C)$ and $r_1 - q \leq 1 - c = \Pr(C^c)$. Hence, we can take q units of A from C and $r_1 - q$ units of A from C^c. Then

$$\Pr(A) = r_1, \qquad \int_A W_0 \, dP = \Pr(A \cap C) = q.$$

Finally, choose a subset $D \subseteq A$ with probability m_1, which is possible because $m_1 \leq r_1$, and set

$$W_1 = \mathbf{1}\{D\}$$

on A, with arbitrary values outside A. Then

$$\int_A W_1 \, dP = m_1.$$

Thus, for every $q \in [\underline{q}_0, \overline{q}_0]$, there exists a joint distribution of (R_1, R_0, W_1, W_0) satisfying all observed

restrictions and delivering

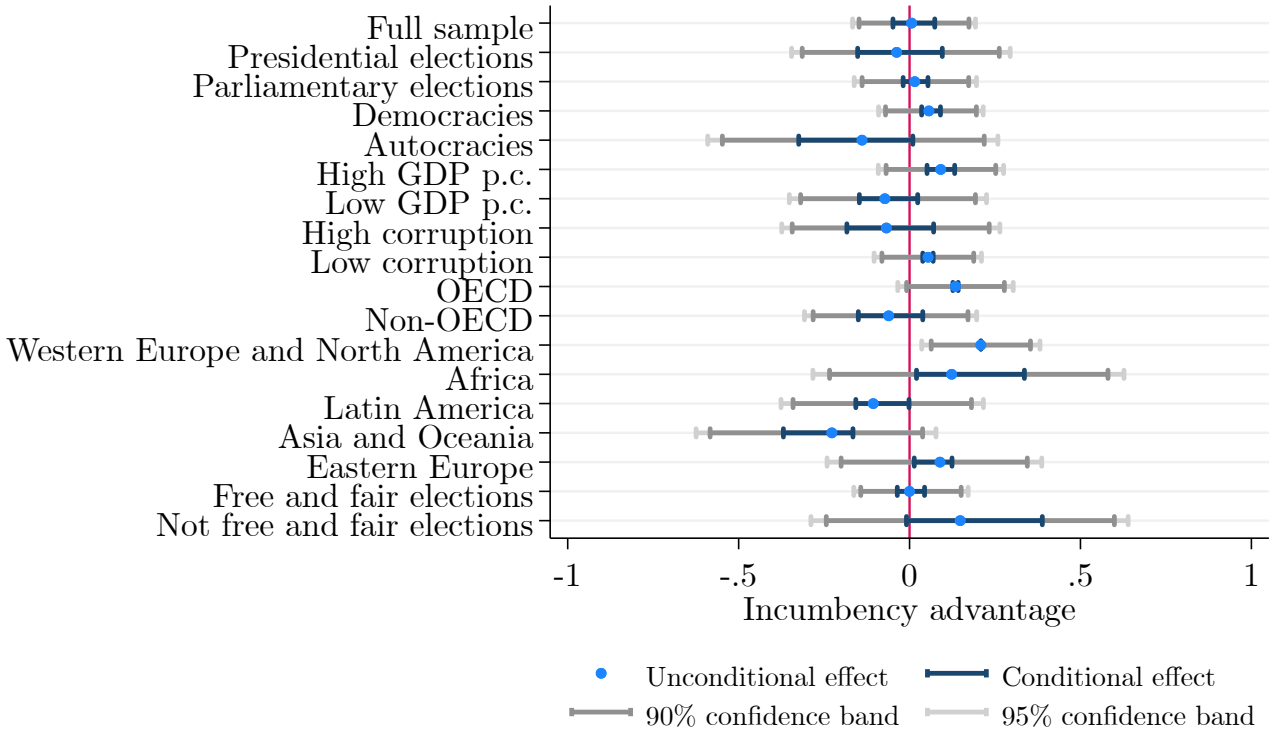
$$q_0 = \mathbb{E}[R_1 W_0] = q.$$

The inequalities above show that no value of q_0 outside this interval is feasible. Hence the interval is sharp. Since

$$\theta = \frac{m_1 - q_0}{r_1}$$

is strictly decreasing in q_0, the stated bounds for θ are sharp as well.

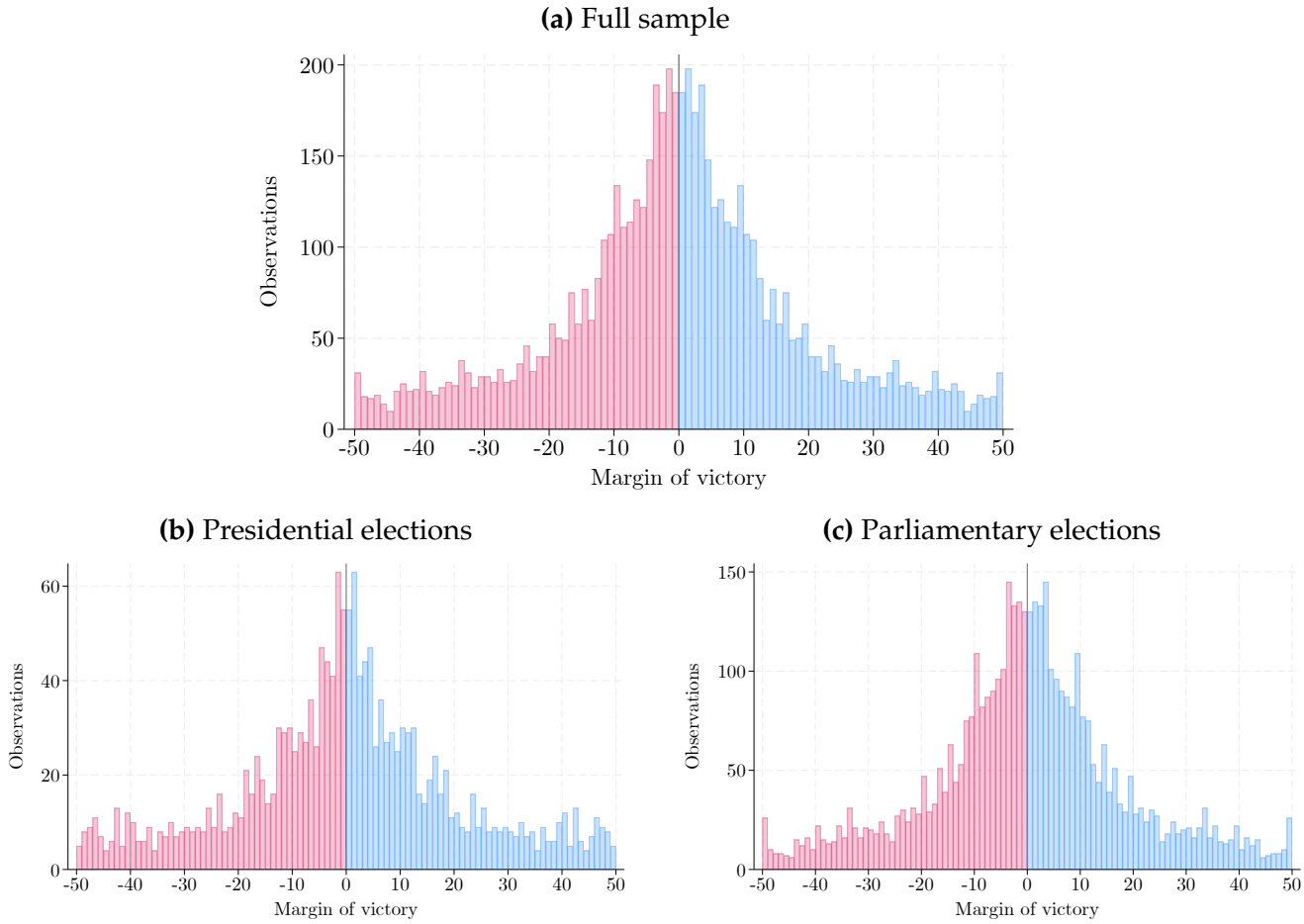
Figure D.1: Bounds for incumbency effects conditional on running



Notes: This figure plots, for different subsamples, the estimated total incumbency advantage (Unconditional effect), the estimated bounds on the effect of incumbency on performance conditional on running (given by equation 4), and their corresponding confidence bands, computed through bootstrap.

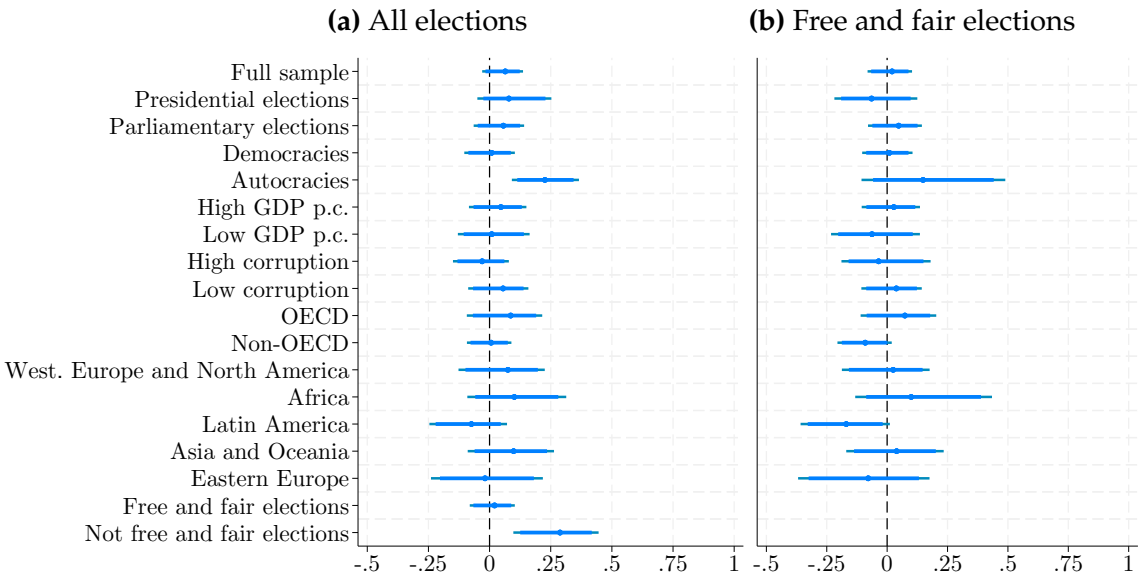
E Additional Results and Robustness Checks

Figure E.1: Density of the running variable



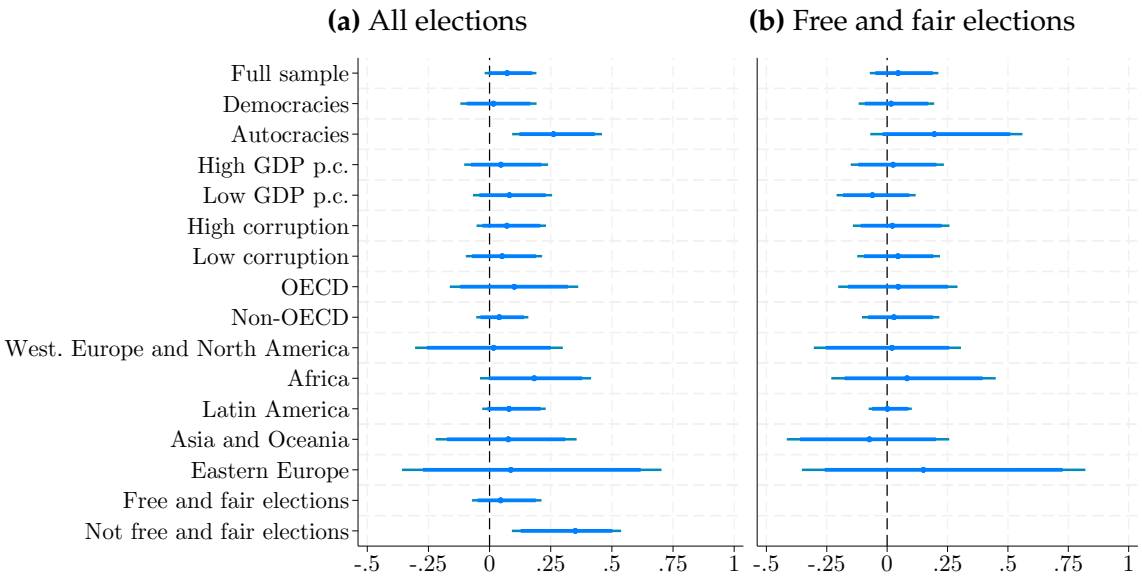
Notes: In this figure, we plot the density of the running variable for the sample of elections used to estimate the total incumbency advantage.

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



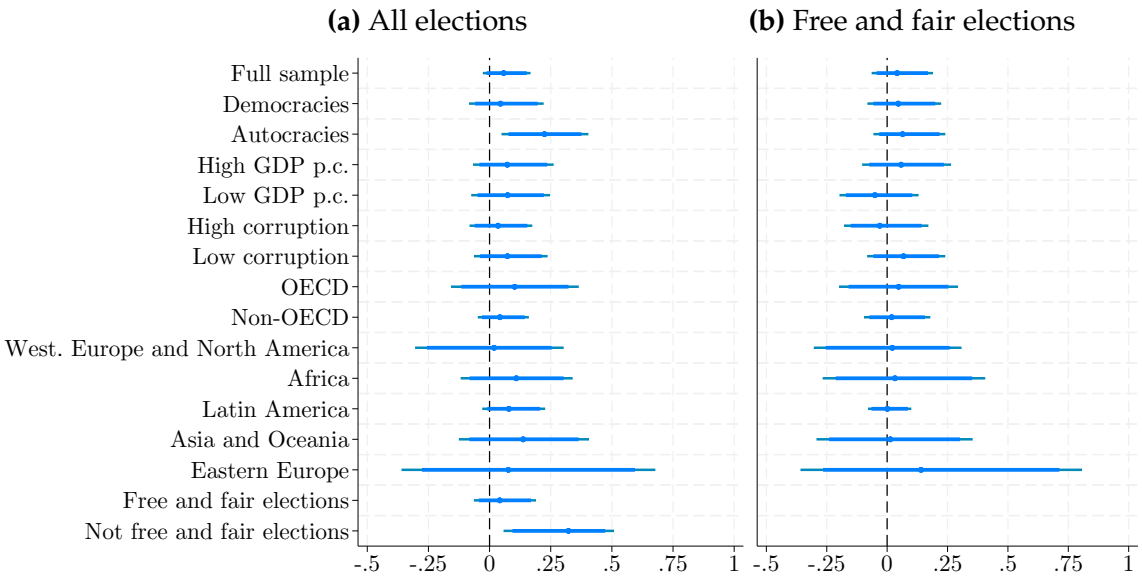
Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power one year and six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include all elections, in 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 E.3: Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power before the election, presidential candidates



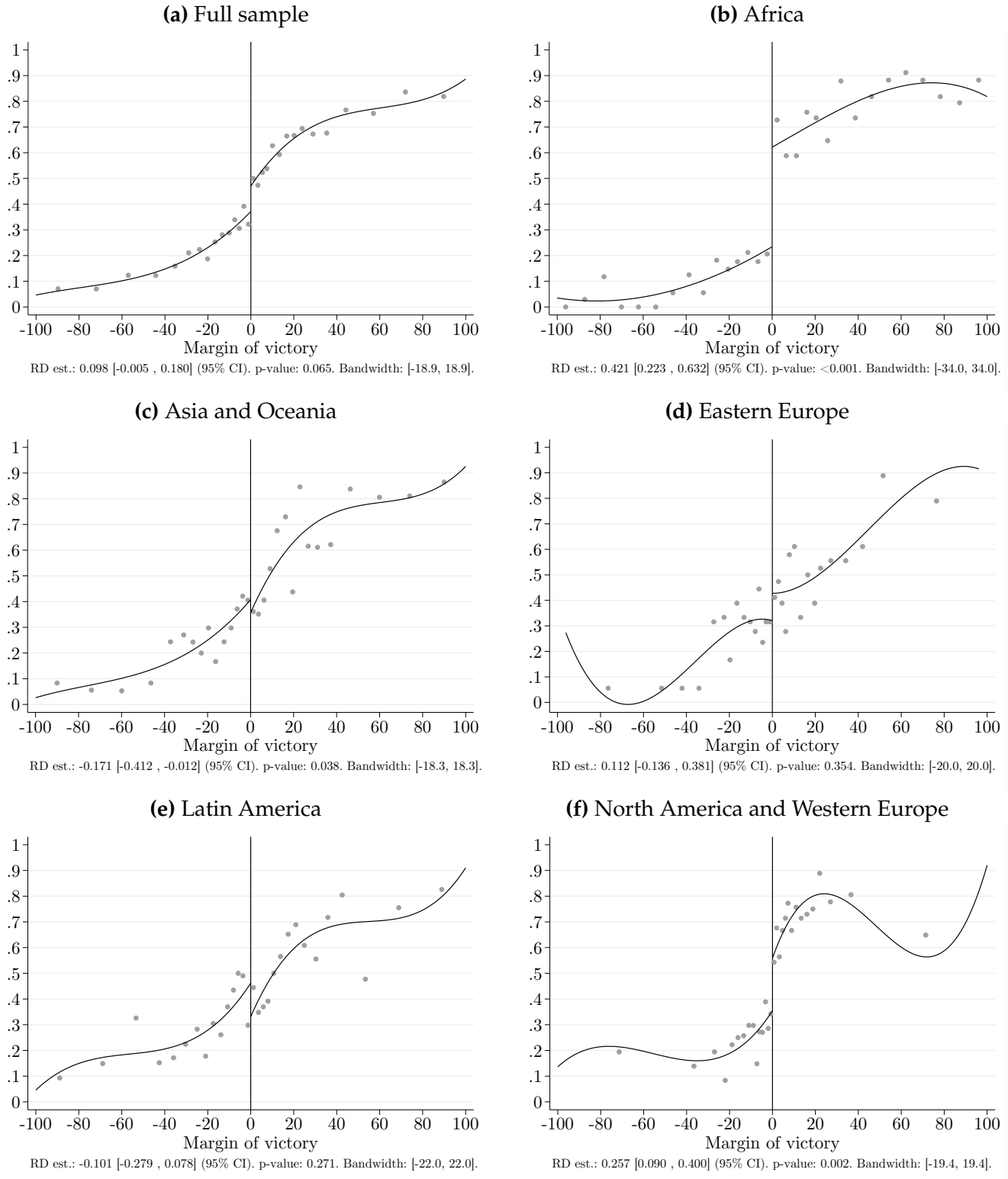
Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning a presidential election on the likelihood that the same individual is in power six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. The sample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

Figure E.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 E.5: Total 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 E.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 E.2: Party-level TIA 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 total incumbency advantage (TIA) in our global sample of elections and various subsamples. 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

	-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)

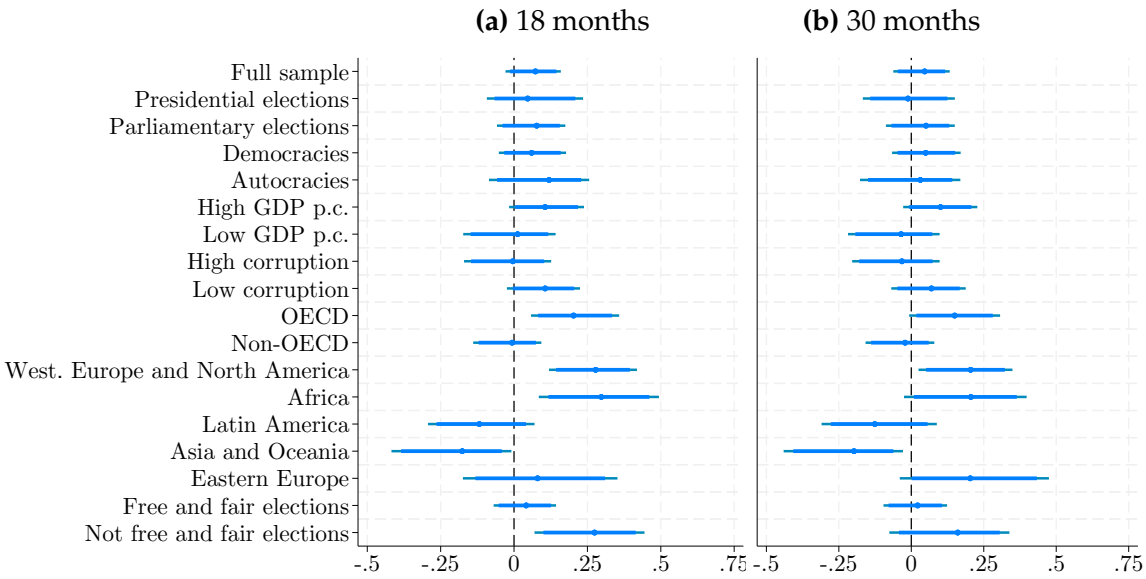
Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section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

Table E.4: Individual-level TIA 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)

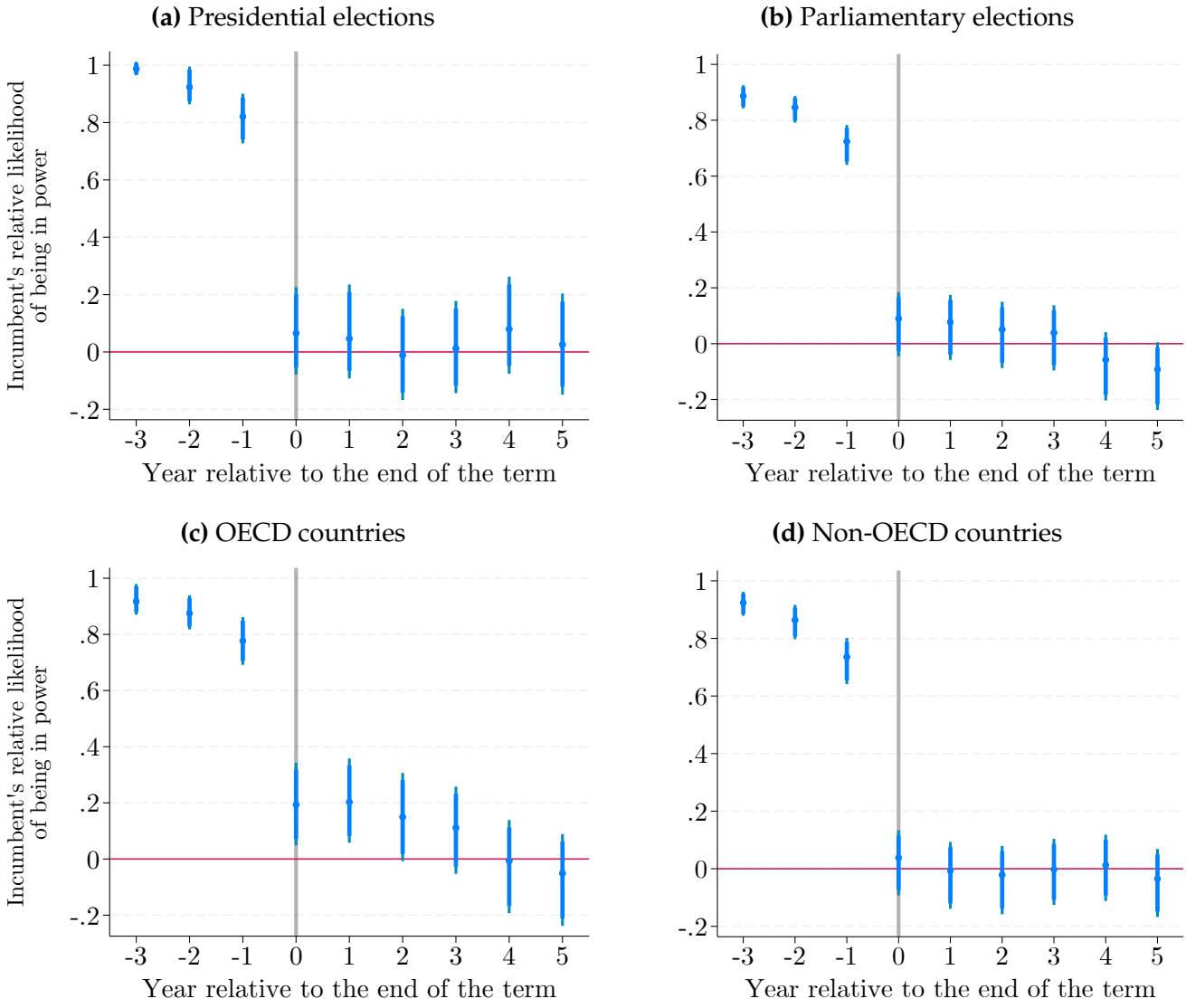
Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report individual-level estimates of the total incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and various subsamples. Our empirical strategy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

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



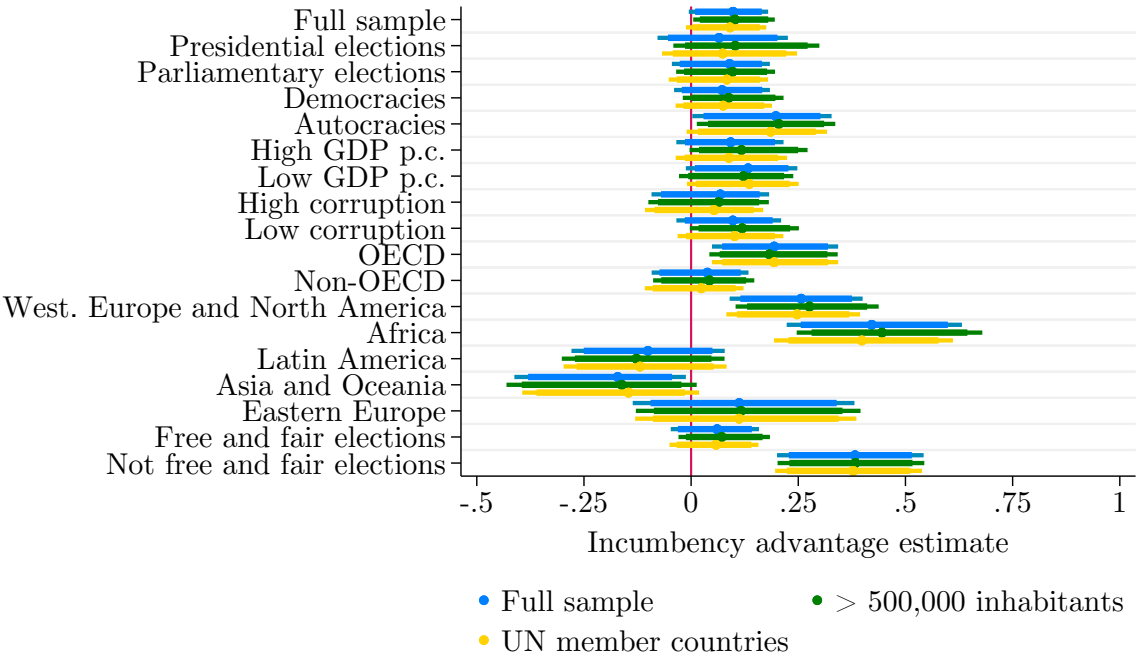
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power 18 months (in panel (a)) or 30 months (in panel (b)) after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples.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

Figure E.7: Total incumbency advantage, by subsample



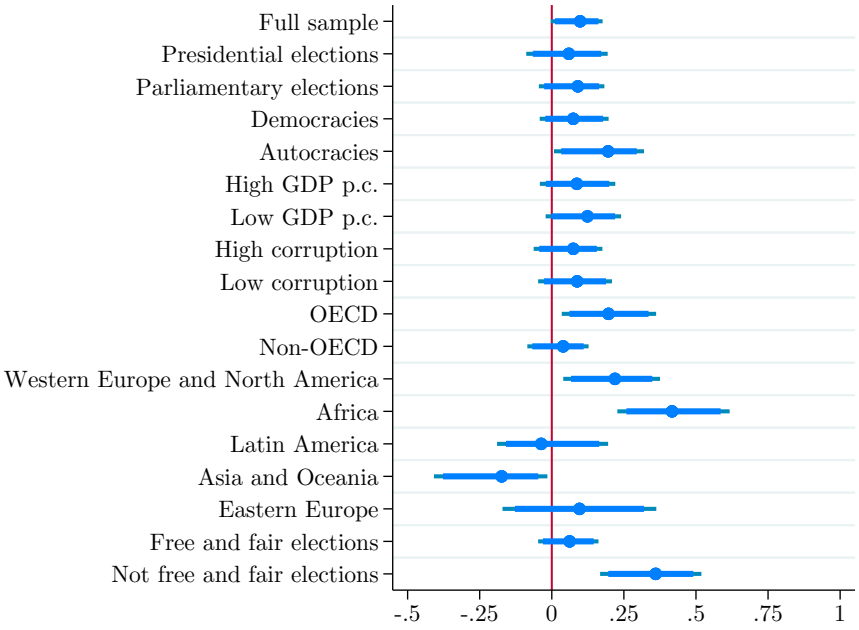
Notes: This figure reports RD point estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals for β_τ as defined in equation (2) in various subsamples. $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ is relative to the scheduled end of term.

Figure E.8: Total incumbency advantage, restricted sample of countries



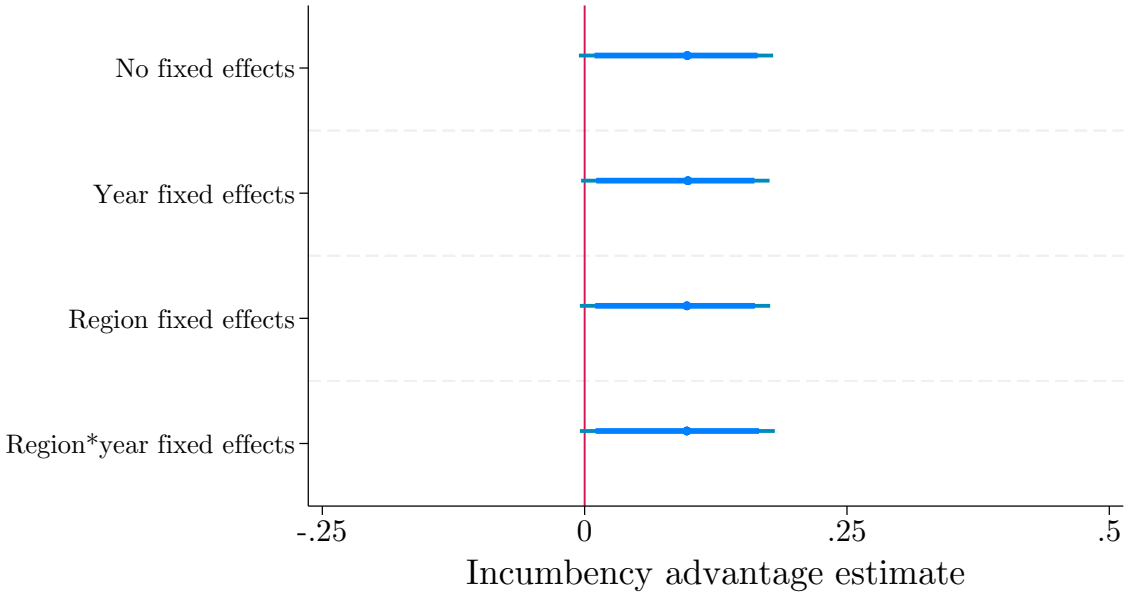
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We restrict the sample to countries 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 E.9: Total incumbency advantage, with election-year fixed effects



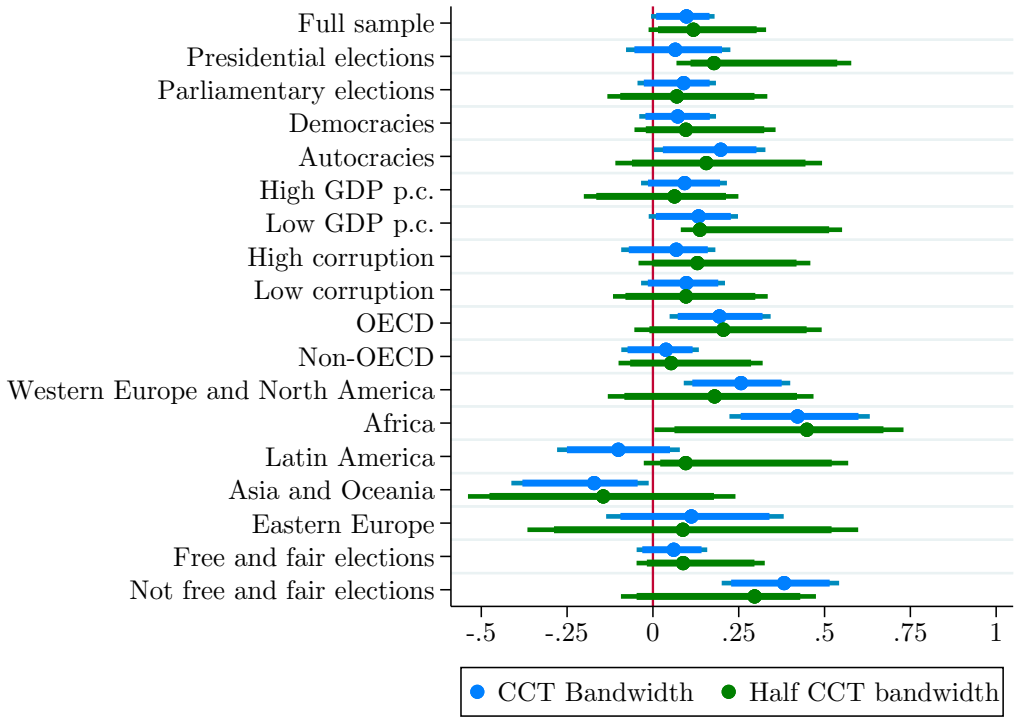
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include fixed effects for the year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

Figure E.10: Total incumbency advantage, alternative fixed effects



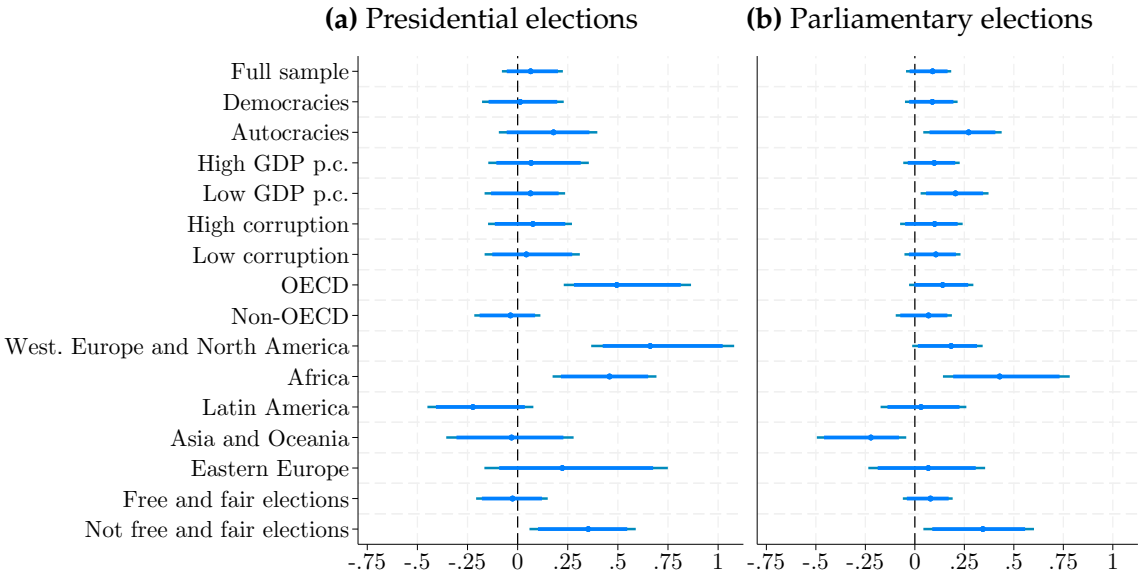
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the total incumbency advantage, including various fixed effects.

Figure E.11: Robustness to bandwidth selection



Notes: This figure reports the same results as in Figure 9, along with estimates computed using half of the optimal bandwidth selected by the procedure of Calonico et al. (2020).

Figure E.12: Total incumbency advantage, presidential vs. parliamentary elections



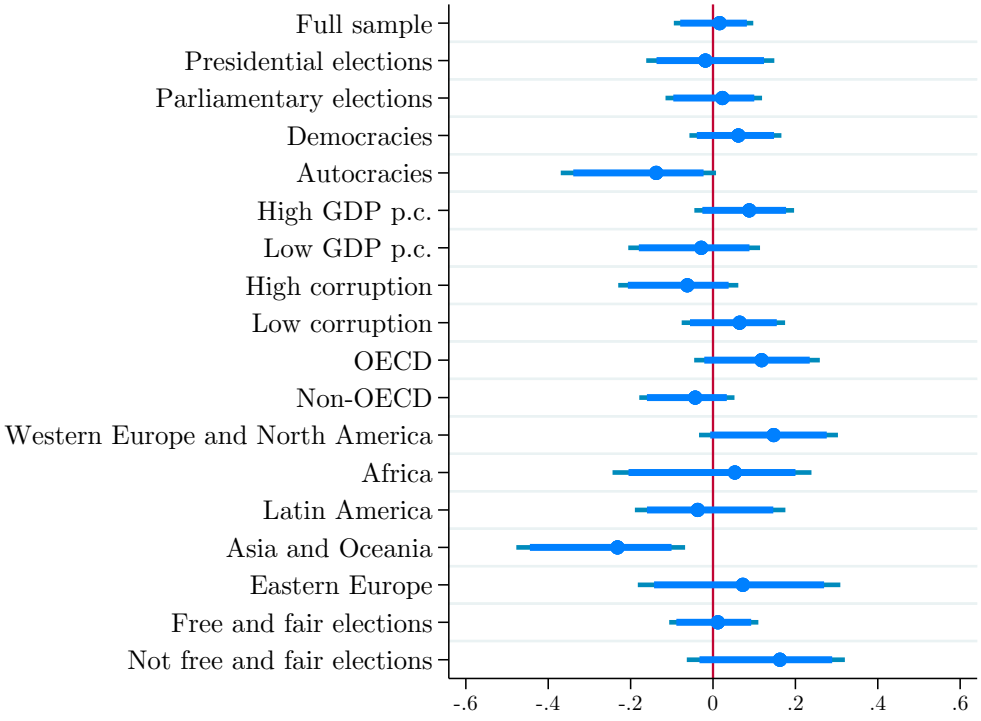
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We restrict the sample to presidential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

Table E.5: Party-level CIA 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]

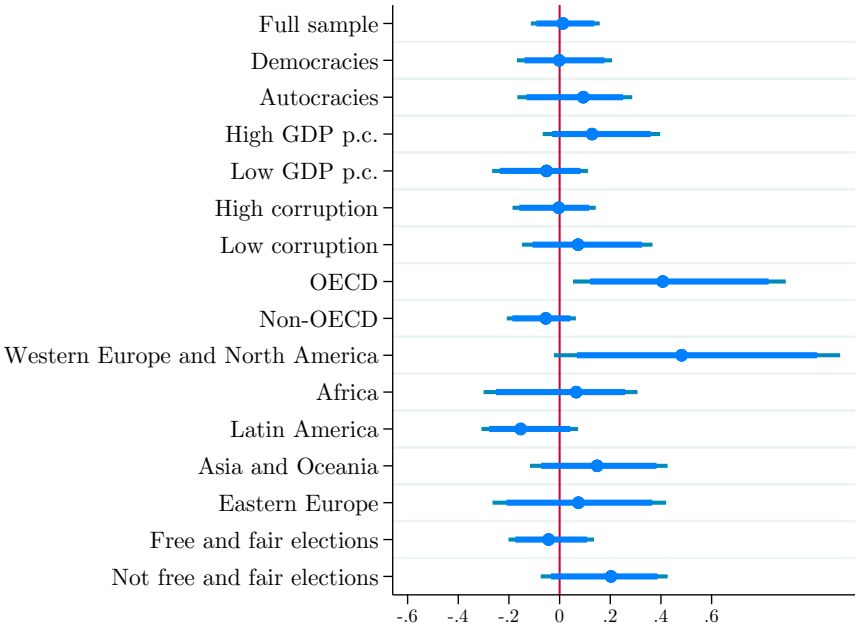
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in and winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described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

Figure E.13: CIA estimation 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.

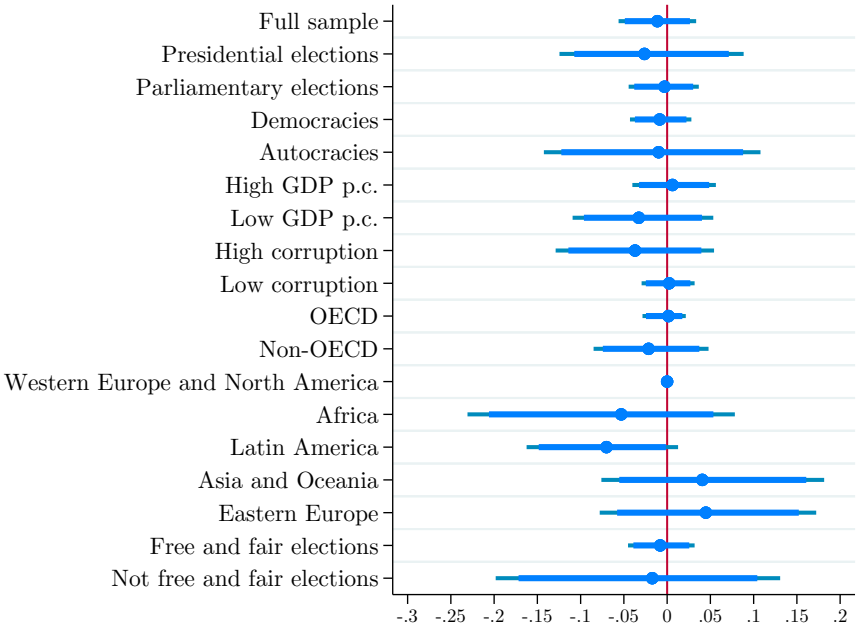
Figure E.14: Individual-level CIA estimates in presidential elections



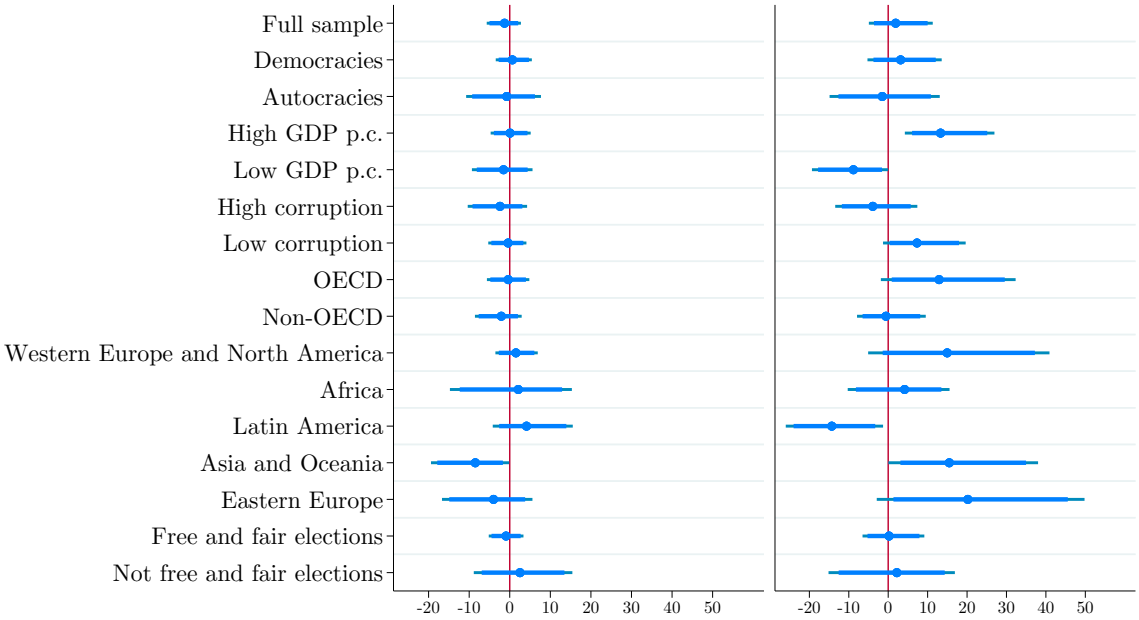
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of individual-level estimates of the conventional incumbency advantage (CIA) in presidential elections, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section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

Figure E.15: Incumbency effects on running and unconditional performance in the next election

(a) Running in the next election

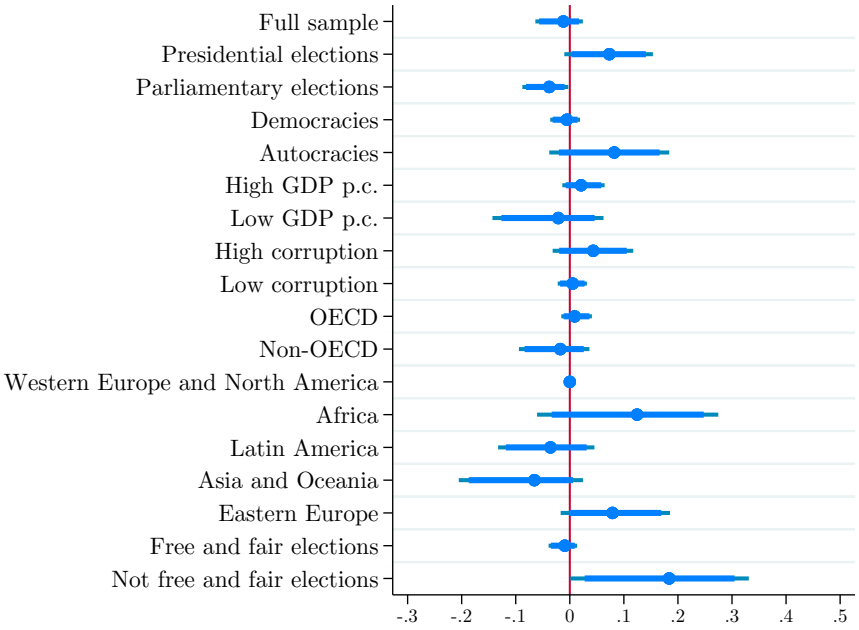


(b) Seat share (parliamentary elections) **(c)** Vote share (presidential elections)



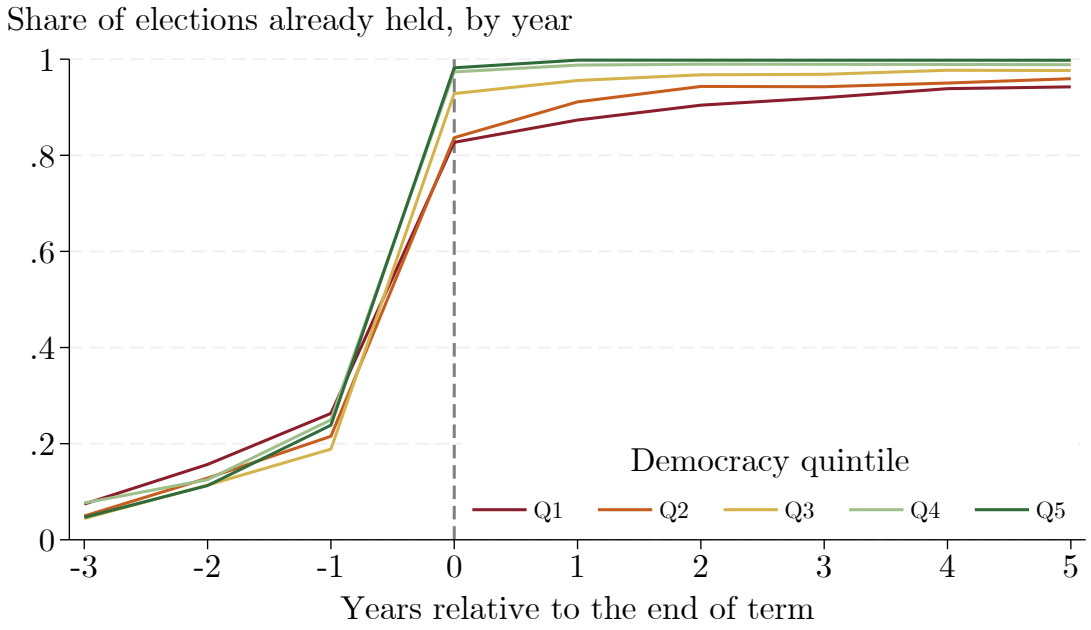
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effects of winning an election on a party's likelihood of running again in the next election (panel a), on its seat share in parliamentary elections (panel b), or its vote share in presidential elections (panel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

Figure E.16: CIA in non free and fair elections



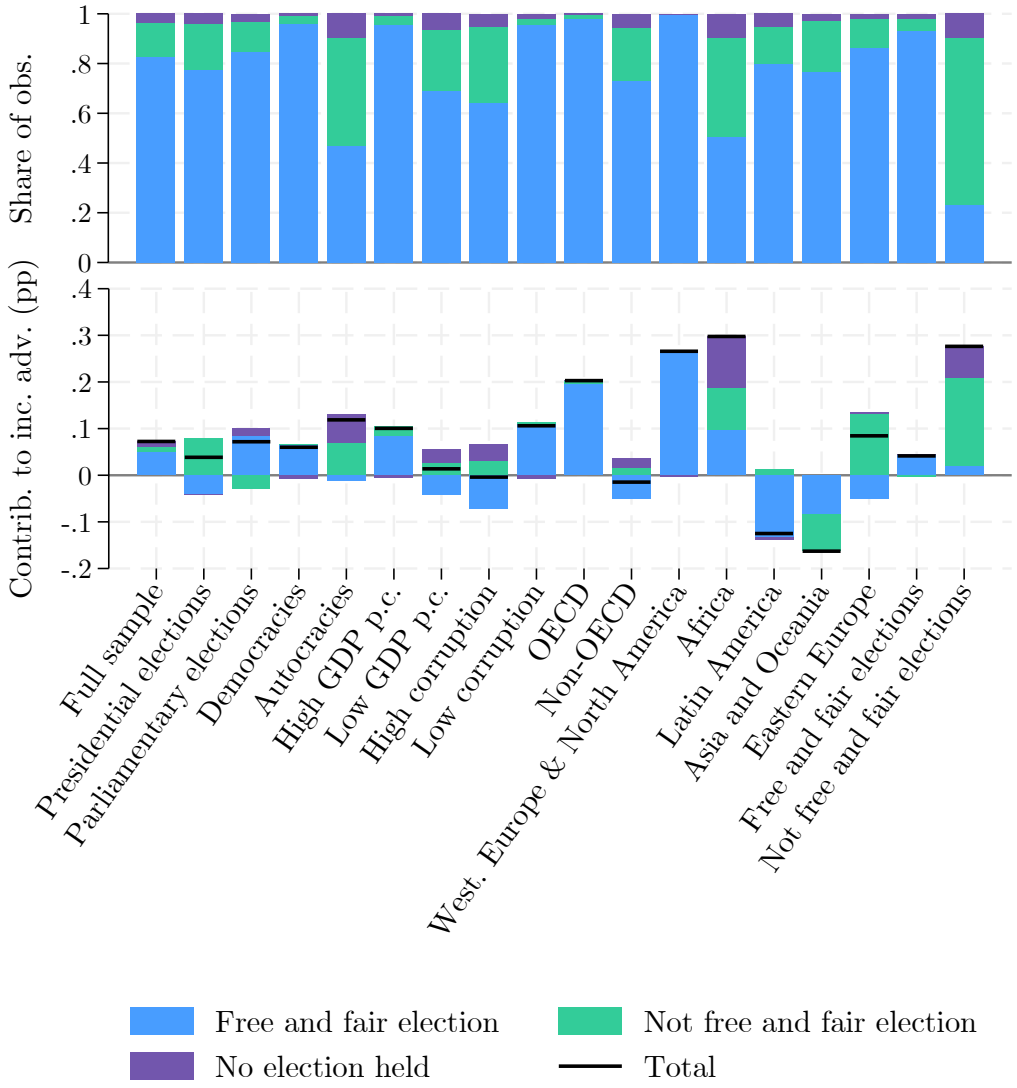
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of winning the next election and the next election being coded as not free and fair, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples.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

Figure E.17: Timing of subsequent elections by democracy quintile



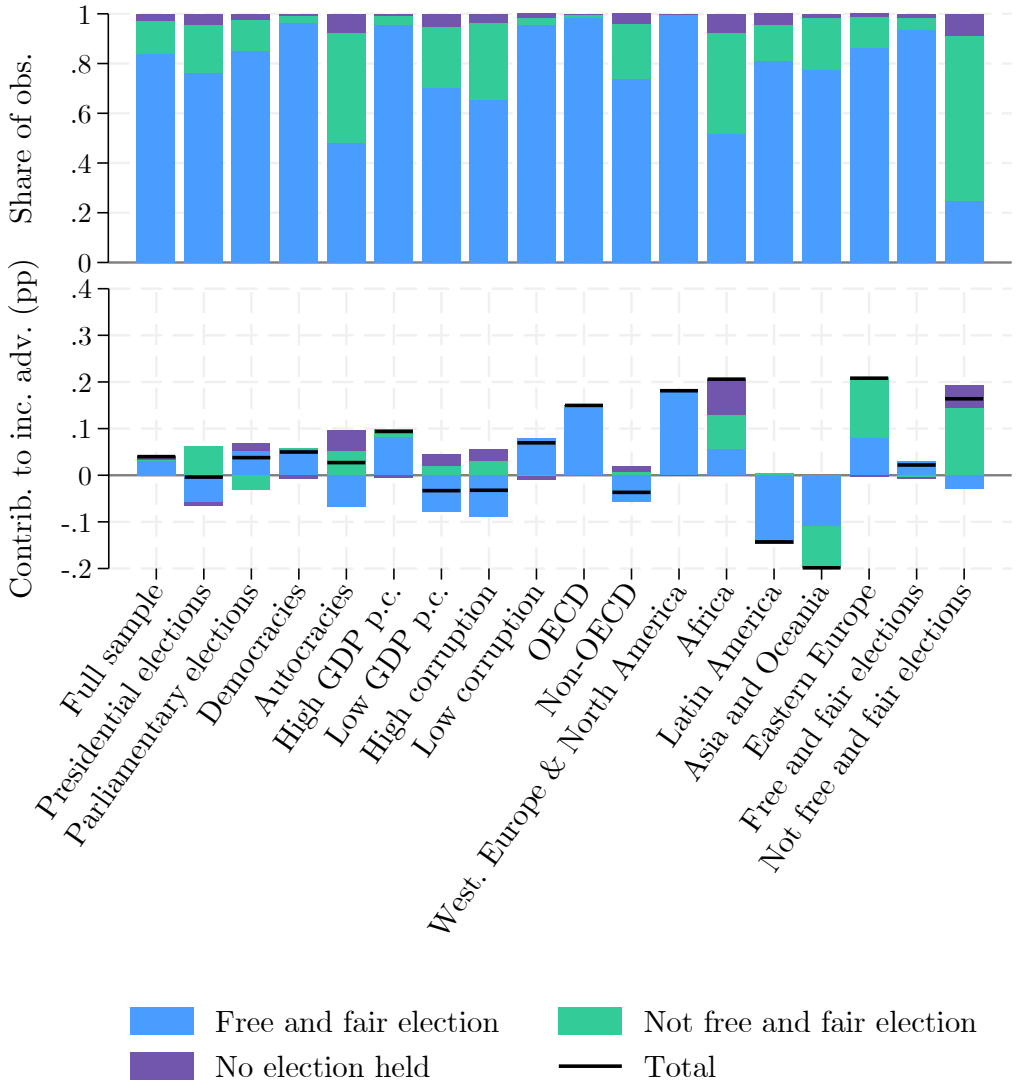
Notes: This graph reports the share of elections that were followed by another election $\tilde{\tau}$ years relative to the planned end of term, with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ for different quintiles of a democracy index (extracted from V-Dem). Democracy levels are measured as an average of V-Dem's 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 E.18: TIA decomposition 18 months after the scheduled end of term



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 9 for the total incumbency advantage measured 18 months after the constitutionally planned end of the term.

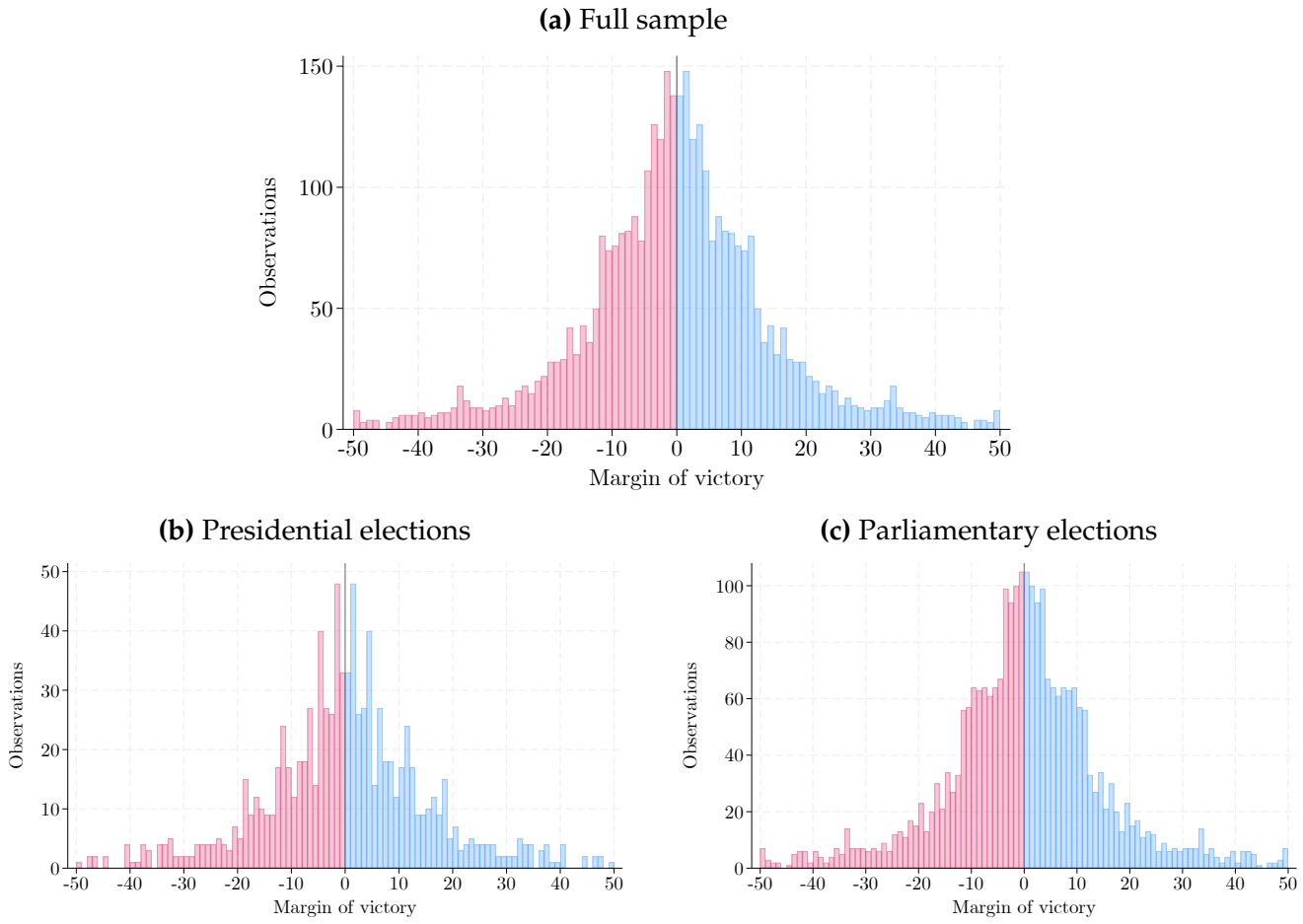
Figure E.19: TIA Decomposition 30 months after the scheduled end of term



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 9 for the total incumbency advantage measured 30 months after the constitutionally planned end of the term.

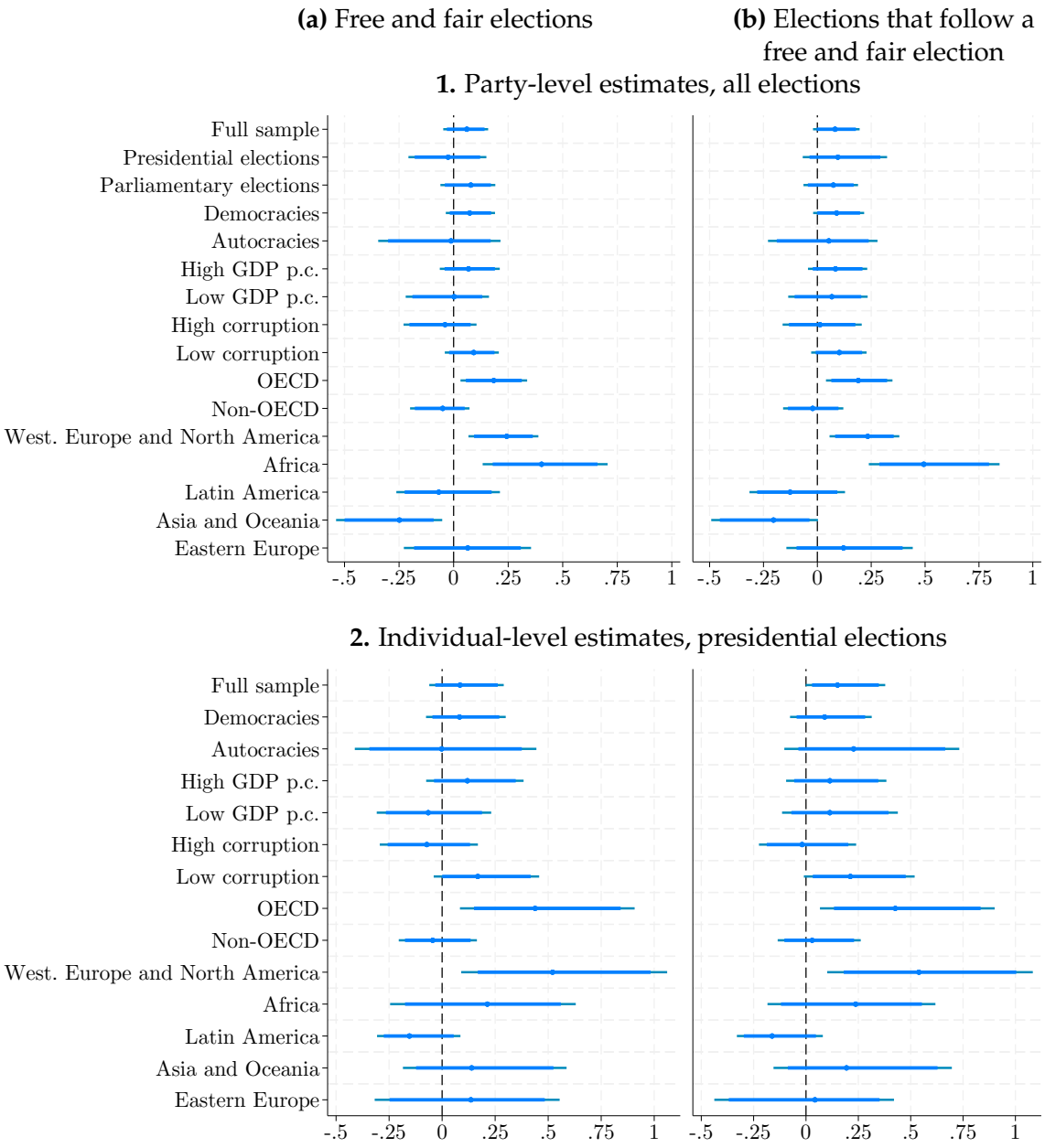
F Robustness to restricting the sample to free and fair elections

Figure F.1: Density of the running variable, free and fair elections



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

Figure F.2: Total incumbency advantage in 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 F.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 F.2: Party-level TIA 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 F.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 F.4: Individual-level TIA 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 F.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 F.6: Party-level TIA 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 F.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 F.8: Individual-level TIA 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 F.9: Party-level CIA 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]

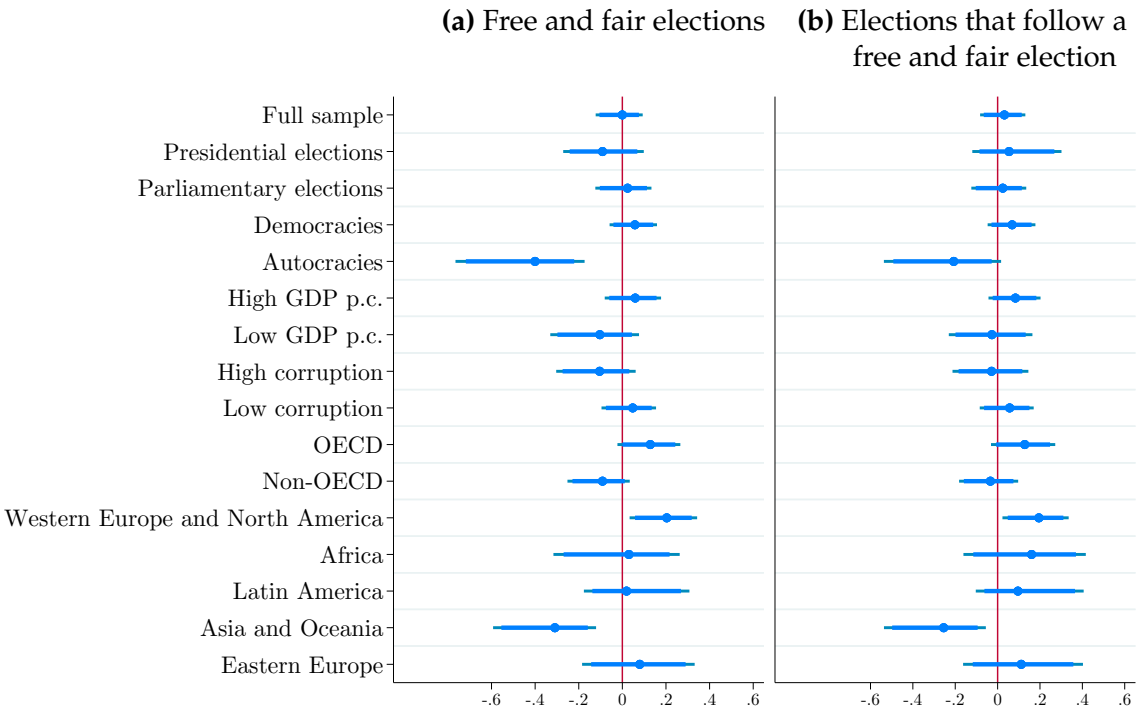
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in an winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and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

Table F.10: Party-level CIA estimates, elections following 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]

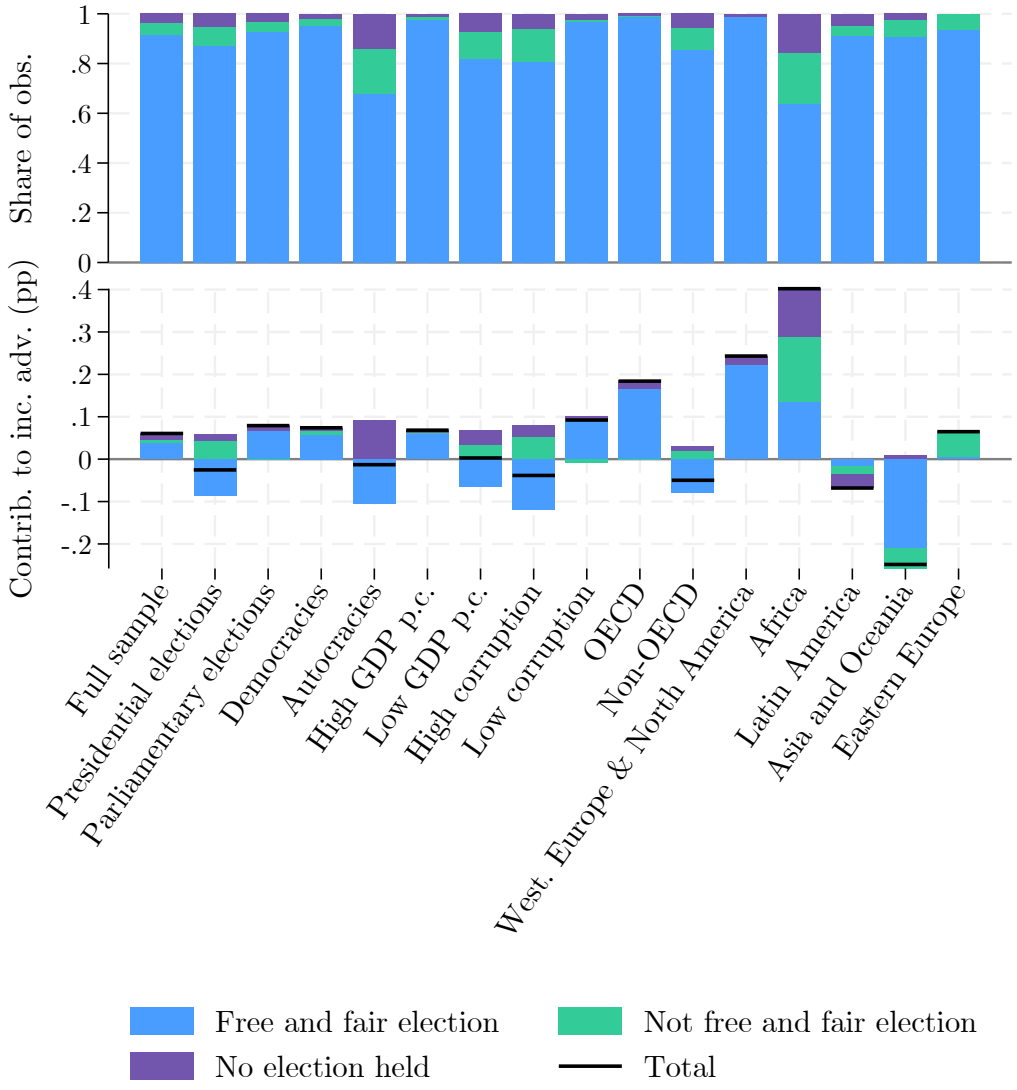
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in an winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election 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 F.3: CIA estimates in free and fair elections



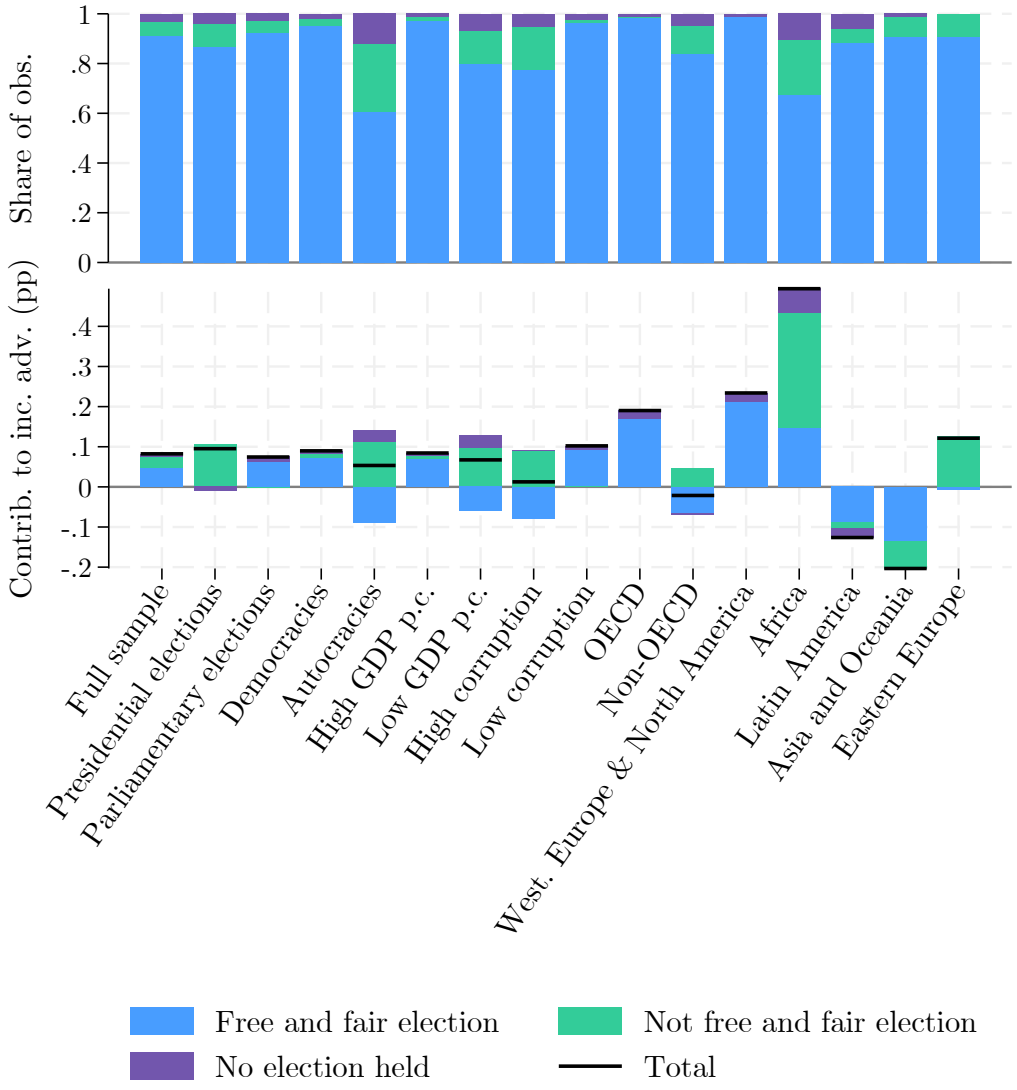
Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 8, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem.

Figure F.4: TIA decomposition, free and fair elections



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 9, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem.

Figure F.5: TIA decomposition, elections following a free and fair election



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 9, but for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem.