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Rinchan Mirza, Adeel Malik and Jean-Philippe Platteau

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Centre for Economic Policy Research
187 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75007 Paris, France
2 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL
Tel: +44 (0)20 7183 8801
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Abstract

How political dynasties affect economic development in the context of poor countries is a moot question. Theoretical predictions do not yield a clear answer and empirical studies remain few. In this paper, we estimate the impact of entrenched political dynasties on local development in Pakistan's largest province, Punjab. Toward this purpose, we compile an original database on political genealogies, which includes information about the personal and family characteristics of both elected representatives and the main contenders in elections for the last one hundred years covering both elections held under colonial rule and Pakistan's modern political existence. Three main findings emerge. First, entrenched political dynasties are historical families whose influence dates back to the colonial period. Second, using a close elections regression discontinuity design, we show that historical families have a worse development impact than non-historic families. Third, based on complementary surveys, we argue that segmented political markets simultaneously account for the long-term persistence of historic families and their negative development impact under conditions of competitive clientelism.

JEL Classification: D02, D72, H70, O12

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Rinchan Mirza - rinchan.mirza@gmail.com
University of Kent, UK

Adeel Malik - adeel.malik@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, UK

Jean-Philippe Platteau - jean-philippe.platteau@unamur.be
University of Namur, Belgium and CEPR

1. Introduction

Since the seminal work of Dal Bo et al. (2009), which documented the persistence of political elites, economists have shown considerable interest in assessing the political influence of dynasties and their effects on growth and development (Besley and Reynal-Querol, 2017; Geys and Smith, 2017; George, 2019). This is an important field of research since family dynasties tend to dominate the political scene in many countries, in Asia especially (Economist, 2024: 42-3).[1] In the surging literature, critical gaps remain and two of them deserve attention. First, little is known about the nature of dynastic families, their horizontal ramifications and historical depth in particular. A central unresolved question is whether such dynasties endure in power continuously over long periods, qualifying as "historic" families, or rotate at intervals not lasting more than a few generations, as is common among business families. Second, empirical evidence about their development impact remains scarce and the underlying mechanisms are often underspecified or insufficiently substantiated. The latter limitation is especially serious when electoral competition is intense, in contrast to situations of political monopoly, such as feudal or clan-based systems, where dynastic persistence may be easier to explain (see, e.g., Acemoglu et al., 2014).

This paper bridges these gaps in the literature through an in-depth case study of Pakistan's Punjab Province, the country's most populous province, and its most politically and economically important one. More to the point, it is marked by intense political competition and a well-documented prevalence of dynastic politics. Our analysis leverages an unprecedented dataset that tracks electoral participation of political dynasties spanning over nearly a century. Covering the period from 1921 to 2013 with detailed genealogical records based on original archival research, it has succeeded in establishing extended family linkages for each and every candidate. Having thus reconstructed complete electoral histories for these dynasties, it is possible to determine how political power is distributed across generations. Dynasties that sustained influence over extended historical periods can be distinguished from families whose political power emerged more recently. It bears emphasis that our empirical approach to the definition of political dynasties differs from prior research, which relied primarily on some form of naming convention to identify political family linkages (Ferraz et al., 2024; Cruz et al., 2017). In contrast, on the basis of a variety of historic and contemporary

[1] The Philippine is perhaps the country where family dynasticism is most pervasive since the times of colonialism (see Mendoza et al., 2012).

primary data sources, we were able to construct actual rather than presumed or implied family genealogies.

To estimate the development impact of (entrenched) political dynasties and explore the underlying mechanism, we resort to a mixed-methods approach. Causality running from dynastic power to local economic development is established by implementing the close elections regression discontinuity design, now considered as the best practice in political economy research (Dal Bó et al., 2009; Querubin, 2016; Folke et al., 2017; George, 2019). This approach is particularly well-suited to Pakistan's context, where competitive clientelism dominates the political landscape and, as has been found in other contexts as well (Kaufmann et al., 2003; Ferraz et al., 2024), political competition occurs primarily between political families rather than ideologically organized parties (Hasnain, 2008; Martin, 2016; Mohmand, 2019).[2] Local economic development is measured as the growth in night-time luminosity during the electoral cycle, an objective, spatially granular indicator of economic activity based on high-resolution night-time lights data. To unpack the mechanism linking entrenched dynastic power to development, we supplement these results with: (1) representative household surveys on institutional trust and public goods access; (2) targeted follow-up surveys examining specific behavioral channels; and (3) qualitative insights from anthropological studies of the elite's political strategies. This comprehensive approach allows us to move beyond reduced form estimates and identify the precise pathways through which dynasties influence local development.

Our analysis yields three key findings. First, generally political dynasties understood as families which accumulated large numbers of legislative seats are not quickly expanding dynasties of recent origin. Rather, they are predominantly historic families whose origins can be traced back to the colonial era (that is families featured in the colonial British archives). In this respect, they resemble those found in the Philippines, yet not those prevailing in India where dynasties are products of post-independence democratic elites. Second, the growth performance of historic dynasties is consistently worse than the performance of non-historic families: in areas where they were narrowly elected, growth in night-lights is significantly lower than in areas where they were narrowly defeated by a non-historic elite. Third, involved in hierarchical patron-client relationships, historic families deploy electoral strategies prioritizing

[2] Note that, while family networks form the core of the bases of political support, internal rivalries often prevent any single family from establishing complete political monopoly (Martin, 2016: 117; Mohmand, 2019: 250; Lyon, 2019: 109; Yadav, 2020: 1053).

the delivery of recurrent (and discretionary) livelihood-protecting services over that of livelihood-enhancing private and public goods. Their deep-rooted penetration of the state makes them especially suited for the effective supply of the services aimed at protecting poor people against arbitrary use of state power. Moreover, being rather regular, calls for assistance in various walks of life allow political patrons to maintain the dependent status of vulnerable people. By thus offering a differentiated type of services, historic families are able to persist in competitive political environments. This characterization resembles the two-party system typically posited in the political economy literature, yet in which parties proposing different ideological or policy platforms are replaced by two types of political families proposing different types of services in exchange for votes.

The first result speaks to the literature emphasizing the role of historical legacy in shaping economic development and, in particular, the long-run negative impact of weak institutions and old traditional elites rooted in colonial and pre-colonial eras (Engerman and Sokoloff, 1997; Nunn, 2009, 2014; Acemoglu et al., 2001, 2005, 2011; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Dalbo et al., 2009; Naidu et al., 2021). The second result is in line with the existing empirical literature which points to the adverse impact of dynasticism on economic development (Asako et al., 2015; Braganca et al, 2015; Ali, 2016; Dal Bo et al., 2019; George, 2019) or, equivalently, to the positive impact of reforms that succeeded in displacing dynastic elites (see Ferraz et al., 2024, for Brazil; and Bazzi et al., 2025, for Indonesia).[3] If this literature may sometimes appear ambiguous and inconclusive, the main reason is that different authors do not use similar definitions and measurements of dynastic power and/or the outcomes through which the impact of political dynasticism is assessed.[4] For instance, Folke et al. (2016) and Labonne et al. (2021) have found that dynastic leaders improve gender representation in politics. As for the way our results, especially the third result, are supported by theoretical arguments, it is best highlighted by shortly surveying the ongoing theoretical debate on the mechanisms behind the effects of dynasticism.

If we think of political families as long-lasting dynasties, infinitely repeated games (or games of indefinite duration) seem the appropriate theoretical framework to understand their reproduction logic. The idea is that, like in a relational contract and in family firms, the reputations of hereditary leaders help surmount moral hazard problems (Besley, 2005; Besley

[3] Except for Ferraz, none of these papers focus on historic families in the sense that we define them.
[4] As mentioned by Geys and Smith (2017), there are "multiple ways, both direct and indirect, in which dynastic politics can have consequences for socio-economic outcomes" (p. 451).

and Reynal-Querol, 2017). Insofar as they care their offspring will follow them in office (say, because they enjoy 'warm glow' benefits), politicians are induced to exert more effort and increase their performance, a prediction which Besley and Reynal-Querol (2017) have partly borne out on the basis of a sample of leaders from 197 countries between 1874 and 2004.[5]

More consonant with the situation of shorter-lived dynasties and with the finding of Besley and Reynal-Querol (2017) that dynasties end when the economic performance of dynastic leaders is poor, is the analysis of George (2019) based on a game of finite duration. In this setup, unlike the founder of a dynasty who faces positive policy incentives, the descendants have relatively weak incentives to perform well in office. The reason is that, thanks to their free access to the political capital accumulated by their ascendants, successor dynasts can persist in power despite their under-achievements in the production of growth-generating public goods. More precisely, the theory yields the prediction that descendants from a dynastic family will relax effort and under-perform if winning an election is not too difficult (meaning that the baseline victory probability due to inherited votes is already quite high). Otherwise, inheriting some political capital can have the opposite effect. This qualification is important insofar as our methodology is based on close contests (see below), so that election victories cannot be assumed to be easy in our study context.

There are two other snags to bear in mind. First, George (2019) defines political capital as assets that help a politician get elected but do not improve in-office performance. If this definition works well when this form of capital is conceived as name recognition, the same cannot be said when it is based on a powerful network of pivotal actors. It is then hard to believe that in-office performance is unaffected by political connections, in particular. Second, as pointed out by George himself (2019), attention is restricted to public goods, implying that politicians cannot invest in political capital by targeting private goods to build a voting base for their descendants. Were such a possibility to exist, politicians with sons would remain more motivated by bequest concerns, yet it would be unclear whether that motivation prompts them to supply public goods and build a reputation for delivering development or provide private goods to a subset of voters and build a reputation for clientelism (p. 11).

A common view among many economists is that the clientelistic strategy is frequently chosen by politicians of developing countries, especially in rural areas. This choice may also

[5] To be more precise, the authors show that economic growth is higher in polities with hereditary leaders *but only if executive constraints are weak*.

be observed in more advanced economies, though. For instance, Asako et al. (2015) make the prediction, tested on Japanese data, that dynastic leaders, who enjoy a higher probability of winning and a higher vote share, tend to harm the economic performance of their district. The explanation is that their advantages are put at the service of rent-seeking policies aimed at benefiting only a fraction of the voters belonging to their support group. Policies designed to encourage growth through investment in the socio-economic infrastructure and the expansion of job opportunities in an entire district are thus sacrificed. A major reason why politicians may prefer to provide private rather than public goods is that they are then able to withhold the distribution of private benefits to residents who did not vote for them in the previous election while they cannot easily claim credit with the electorate for public goods (Lizzeri and Persico, 2001: 227).[6] This logic obviously harms growth and development: by creating a bias towards pork-barrel projects, private transfer programs with short-term payoffs, or discretionary services aimed at dispensing livelihood security at the expense of public goods or private benefits of a long-run nature such as education or health services, strategic transfers from political patrons to targeted subsets of voters often come at the expense of long-term development (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2012; Sarkar, 2014; Anderson et al., 2015).

One central lesson to draw from the theoretical debate is that clientelism can hurt development even when practiced by deeply entrenched political families whose main advantage lies in their well-established influence network comprising connections with the state apparatus at local, regional and national levels. This possibility is especially serious because there is an additional reason why these dynastic families may prefer clientelistic relationships with voters over the provision of public goods: clientelism may prevent the economic and social emancipation of their voting base and hence better ensure their dynastic hold on power in the future (for a similar argument, see Bourguignon and Verdier, 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006). If true, we would then have a potential explanation as to why political families persist over time while producing few positive effects for development.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 characterizes the political system of Pakistan and the way it has changed over time, placing emphasis on the role of political families. In Section 3, we offer details about the data that we have been able to collect, distinguishing between election results, the profiles of politicians, and growth of night-time

[6] A central assumption is therefore that secret ballots can be circumvented, and political leaders or brokers are able to monitor how each citizen votes (Sarkar, 2014; Bardhan et al., 2020). Evidence for Pakistan is provided by Martin (2016: 141).

luminosity. Descriptive statistics are supplied thereafter. Section 4 is then devoted to the exposition of the methodology used for measuring the impact of political dynasties on local economic growth (as measured by growth in night-time luminosity). It is followed by Section 5, which presents our main results and demonstrates their robustness. Section 6 adduces complementary evidence in support of a particular interpretation of the results, which we discuss in detail. Section 7 briefly concludes.

2. An overview of politics in Pakistan

Two central features of the Pakistani political system, as well as their historic antecedents and evolution, need to be brought to light because they form important elements of the context of our empirical analysis.

2.1 Weak party structures and personalization of politics

Party structures, which are weak in Pakistan, are characterized by a high degree of personalization. In particular, there are no internal elections for the leader or the key posts, and factional struggles are rife inside the party (Hasnain, 2008: 146). As Cheema, Javid and Naseer (2013) point out in their important study on the subject, the organizational form of politics that has emerged "is a hybrid with political party apparatuses being built on an edifice of dynastic families and their networks rather than party machines organized around ideology, ethnicity, class and/or programmatic platform" (p. 2). Political parties have thus chosen to forge alliances with dynastic politicians rather than build a machinery around dedicated party cadres. (It is revealing in this context that voters admit that their voting choice has almost never been influenced by visits of party cadres).[7] Hence a self-reinforcing cycle persists that feeds both the success of dynasties and the organizational weakness of the parties. Not surprisingly, in this context, the frequent switching of political parties by members of these families and the sprouting of various like-minded factions have become the norm in politics (p. 3; see also Yadav, 2020: 1055; Lyon, 2019: 109). Not only do dynastic leaders often indulge in party switching, easily shifting their loyalty if this better serves their interest, but their families may also be engaged simultaneously in different parties. These features attest to their lack of ideological commitment and their opportunistic determination to see that their patronage tactics are not foiled by changing political circumstances. Their constant concern is to act in such ways

[7] Data come from the FAFEN (Free And Fair Election Network) survey (2011).

that they can enhance their personal reputations and carry them across party lines if needed (Hasnain, 2008: 145).

It was General Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988), moved by his ambition to suppress mass-appealing parties based on ideology, who laid the groundwork for a persisting change in the way politics is run in Pakistan (Hasnain, 2008: 145; Ziring, 1988: 804; Martin, 2016: 74; Malik and Mirza, 2022; Malik et al., 2023). Under his rule, the allocation of party tickets and ministries became more and more patently "an outcome of individual bargaining between powerful local brokers and party leaders" (Cheema et al., 2005: 13). The system was given a strong boost in the mid-1980s when Zia gave elected politicians direct control over the allocation of special development funds. This practice, which allowed federal and provincial politicians to obtain unaudited control over local-level development allocations, continued unabated under all civilian governments after him and continues to grease the wheels of patronage politics until today. A major step toward the reshaping of politics under Zia was the bridling of direct bureaucratic representation in local governments, bringing the bureaucracy under the control of elected politicians and thereby granting greater autonomy to the elected tier at the local level (Cheema et al., 2005: 28).[8] In this framework, kinship ties assumed great political force as a means to fragment popular political opposition (Martin, 2016: 93). The decentralization reform of Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) reinforced this trend. Provincial administration became accountable to elected officials at the local level and "the vast majority of public services that were previously under the provincial administration, have been transferred to the local governments, substantially increasing their scope and responsibilities" (Cheema et al., 2005: 16-17). The idea was apparently "to create a political constituency that could be easily manipulated through the granting and withholding of government funds and patronage" (Martin, 2016: 124).[9]

As a result of these successive reforms, the power of local politicians increased relative to that of the bureaucracy, whose strength has also been undermined by blatant and growing

[8] To this effect, the provincial bureaucracy at such level was made accountable to the elected heads of district and *tehsil* (i.e. sub-district) administrations.

[9] For Cheema et al. (2005), Musharraf's local government reforms represented a continuity of the country's central historic tendency, which consisted for central power (the British Imperial state first, the Pakistani military, later) to seek legitimacy by creating a localized patronage structure that produces a class of 'collaborative politicians' acting as a conduit between local-level constituencies and the non-representative center. As a result, all attempts at centralization of political power greatly weakened the organizational structure of political parties and distorted electoral competition at the provincial and central levels, not least by selectively disqualifying political party representatives and at times outrightly banning all or certain parties (p. 25).

interference of MPs (Members of Parliament) in administrative issues, including matters of postings, transfers, and promotions of key officials, such as provincial police heads.[10] It is apparently this weakened capacity of district bureaucrats to deliver political support for the military together with the increased organizational autonomy of local elites that explains why the military chose to abandon the bureaucratic control model and assign wide-ranging functional responsibilities and resources to locally elected politicians (Cheema et al., 2005: 29). In urban areas, where different dynamics were at play, what mattered most was the support of business families. Zia chose to promote the interests of a rising group of Punjabi businessmen at the expense of the Muhajir (immigrants from India at the time of the partition) businessmen of Karachi.[11] These new business families, known as Navay Raje ('new lords'), had long histories and roots in the local communities in which they lived. Many of them were able and willing to use their status as local employers to generate significant political support among the urban populace who were dependent on the wages and protection they provided. In return for their support to the military, they received substantial advantages, including the ability to establish and preserve mutually beneficial business partnerships with members of the army (Armytage, 2019: 167-9).

2.2 Growing political competition at local level: the role of kin networks and factions

There is growing micro-evidence that in rural areas the power of the landed gentry is no longer automatic or guaranteed, forcing them to bargain with, or accept the presence of, a new class of agricultural entrepreneurs, agro-processors, brokers, and intermediaries. In other words, in many localized rural settings, several candidates backed by their voting blocs are contending for power. Political competition often appears to be reasonably strong, sometimes even sharp.

Voting blocs may be organized vertically, especially when rural voters are economically dependent on the local elites and relate with them individually in the context of a patron-client relationship. The client is then expected to support his patron politically. This is the dominant pattern in villages characterized by high land inequality. Alternatively, voting blocs may be organized horizontally, usually on the basis of kinship groups or through what can be termed 'broker clientelism'. These horizontal blocs, which are a priori more conducive to development

[10] See, for instance, the scandal denounced in *Dawn*, May 24, 2021 ("Lodhran DPO transferred on Tareen camp demand"): a competent District Police Officer with the required seniority was removed to make way for a young officer imposed by a clan acting behind the coalition of parties in power.
[11] Zia moved the country's capital city from Karachi (in Sindh province) to Islamabad (in his native Punjab province).

than vertical blocs (see Section 1), are a frequent feature of more egalitarian villages, and the most cohesive of them are made of kin-related economically independent landholders who possibly want to assert their common interests against bigger landlords (Martin, 2016: 118; Mohmand, 2019: Chap. 6). In these villages, moreover, members of the lower castes are no longer the captured vote bank of the landed aristocracy, and they may shift alliances depending on the circumstances (Jan, 2019: 190), thus giving rise to a "democratization of patronage politics" (p. 194 –citing Wilder, 1999: 199).

Contrary to a simplified view, kinship groups (*biraderis*) do not always form the basis of a voting bloc. Martin (2016: 117) even argues that in Punjab the extended *biraderi* is rarely the main unit of political activity. It may be divided into different factions (*dharras*) because of personality rivalry or the perceived need to diversify risks. In the former instance, illustrated by the old confrontation between the Gilani and Quraishi families (Multan district), factions can ally themselves with outsiders against their own clan members and even their close kin (owing to competition over land or over local dominance), sometimes leading to violent and enduring feuds. Bitter fights involve religious as well as secular elites. In the latter instance, the *biraderi*'s potential voting influence is put into several baskets (vote blocs) so as to avoid being stuck with a losing candidate. Factions are then the outcome of a coordinated decision, and their insurance function is especially important in contexts where the landed elite, eager to retain its erstwhile power and prerogatives, compete vigorously for vote bloc members (Mohmand, 2019: 250; Lyon, 2019: 109; Yadav, 2020: 1053). The core of a faction is often based on cooperation between male siblings and preferential cousin marriages, since keeping daughters within the *biraderi* yields prestige (Martin, 2016: 96, 117).

Most relevant for the present study is the fact that competition between voting blocs at local level does not appear to erode political dynasticism. As early as after the elections of 1985 and 1988, under Zia's impetus, there was thus "a substantial infusion of new entrants into the dynastic pool", yet at the same time, "a large share of these individual non-dynastic entrants into politics thrived and formed successful dynastic families in their own right. This suggests that the emergence of a new pool of politicians may not imply a weakening of the dynastic system of politics and, instead, may only result in the replacement of one set of dynastic families by another" (Cheema et al., 2013: 4). Thus, since the elections of 1985, business-owning, trading and professional elites have been increasingly successful in forming dynastic families, which explains why a significant presence of dynasticism also exists in the less landed and more

equal central-eastern districts of the Punjab province. To sum up, regardless of the specific context, the general rule remains that electoral contests take place between political families.

Before turning to the next section, it is useful to provide a summary picture of the succession of rulers and regimes since Pakistani independence, together with the dates of all the intervening elections. This is done in Figure 1. While taking cognizance of it, we should keep in mind that, for most of Pakistan's short history (the exception is Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's rule), the country was trapped in a sort of "self-perpetuating cycle whereby civilian governments characterized by the factional politics of patronage were ousted by military governments who further entrenched factional politics by stunting political development" (Martin, 2016: 82). As the most recent events testify, whether it acts in the front of the stage or behind the scenes, the army is the key political actor in Pakistan. The jailing of Prime Minister Imran Khan is just a repetition of the elimination of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the hands of General Zia, both interventions being a reminder of who is effectively in charge.

3. Data

In this section, we describe the type and sources of data used in our empirical analysis. Broadly speaking, we construct two highly fine-grained databases to capture the core dimensions of political and economic development of Pakistani Punjab.

3.1 Political data

We compiled data on elections and political families in Punjab that dates back around a century and covers the period, 1921-2013. This is the most comprehensive data collection effort carried out for Punjab to date. In the first stage, we compiled the list of candidates and their election results. In the second stage we collected primary information on candidates and their relatives who participated in electoral politics.

ELECTORAL DATA. In total, we have collected data for 19 elections out of which 13 were held in the post-independence period. We discuss below the list of pre- and post-independence election rounds and the accompanying data sources.

First, we compiled data for the six election rounds held during the pre-partition period, which are as follows: 1921, 1923, 1925, 1929, 1937 and 1945 elections. For this we relied on

British archives detailing election results in the colonial period.[12] Under British rule limited enfranchisement was introduced as part of the Government of India Act of 1919. The first Punjab Legislative Council was constituted in 1921 with 70 percent of its 93 members elected and the rest appointed or nominated. In the West Punjab, the districts constituting contemporary Pakistani Punjab nominated members were typically tribal chiefs, members of landed gentry, and other elite groups patronized by the colonial authority. For the first three Legislative Councils (1921, 1923, 1925), we gathered information for both elected and non-elected candidates. Data for the remaining three elections in the pre-partition era mainly involve elected candidates. We used the historic delimitation files to identify respective colonial-era districts in West Punjab in which these candidates ran for elections.

We then extended this data to include electoral records for three early post-partition election rounds held in 1951, 1962, and 1965. Information for these was obtained from the respective Gazetteers of the Government of Pakistan available at the Library of National Assembly of Pakistan. Finally, we compiled detailed election results for ten contemporary rounds of the national assembly elections held since 1970. These include the following general elections: 1970, 1977, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, and 2013. Data for these election rounds is consistently available from the Election Commission of Pakistan and published reports of Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN). The FAFEN reports contain all essential electoral data, including total votes registered in a constituency, votes polled for each candidate, name of political party, the margin of victory, etc.

DATA ON POLITICAL FAMILIES. We collected detailed information on the profiles of the top three candidates in each constituency and election year. A four-step procedure was followed for this purpose. First, we compiled publicly available information on elected members from the online directory of the Punjab Assembly's website. Apart from information on age, education, and professional associations (e.g. membership of legislative committees), this online repository contains detailed information on relatives who have been elected to past or present legislatures. This information has been consistently provided for elected members since 2002.

[12] India Office. 1921. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India. London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 1261; India Office.1924. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1923. London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 2154; India Office. 1927. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India 1925 and 1926. London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 2923; India Office. 1931. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India 1930 and 1931. London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 3922; India Office. 1937. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India 1937. London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 5589; Government of India. 1948. Return Showing the Results of Elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures in 1945-46. Delhi: Manager, Government of India Press.

Second, we expanded this information over time and across candidates using a rich literature on Punjab's electoral politics in Urdu (Ismail 1986; Anjum, 1990, 1995; Jaffrey, 2007). We supplemented this source with newspaper profiles, election supplements of local newspapers, Facebook pages of election candidates, and their Wikipedia entries. Thus, we developed an extensive database reporting the family ties of the top three candidates for each constituency, considering family relations of both direct (based on blood ties) and indirect (based on marriage alliances) types.[13]

Third, to fill in the remaining gaps, we carried out a specialized telephone survey aimed at constructing a complete personal profile for each election candidate as well as a list of socio-economic characteristics for each constituency. Carried out by the chief election reporter of a major Urdu newspaper (*Dunya*), the survey allowed us to build a detailed dataset containing information about the relatives (direct or indirect) of each candidate, when they participated in elections, and whether they won a seat or not. For each district, the surveyor was assisted by correspondents of local newspapers who possessed detailed knowledge of the leading political families. Information could thus be obtained on the age, education, profession, and colonial-era position of the key members of all political families. We also know whether a candidate belongs to a major landed family and to historic nobility, including the religious (shrine) elite. To determine whether a candidate's family enjoyed historical influence in the colonial period, we relied on a range of sources published in Urdu and, in particular, on the colonial-era District Gazetteers. These sources reveal the identity of key families and tribes, namely those that received colonial land grants, benefited from official appointments (e.g. tax collectors/zaildars, assistant commissioners, *darbaris*, etc.), or participated in legislative elections under British rule.

Finally, we conducted a separate verification exercise through a quick survey made by a senior journalist who covers the election beat of a major English daily (*Dawn*) in Islamabad. Assisted by a network of local reporters, we used this verification survey to weed out incorrect entries, add new relations, and fill gaps in the database. Thus constructed, our unique database on political families in Punjab covers around a hundred years (1921 to 2013). Online Appendix

[13] For example, brothers and their children are directly related family members, whereas their spouses or the spouses of their children have become part of the family through marriage.

A1 provides a snapshot of the overall format in which the requisite family-level information was compiled for the Attock district (north Punjab).[14]

3.2 Development outcome and covariates

To properly test the local development impact of entrenched political families, we require a development outcome that is measured over time after each election year in our dataset and can be directly related to the in-office performance of elected representatives. We thus ideally need variables in the nature of flows or changes in stock, such as they are observed after the election in question. The only variable available to us which strictly satisfies these requirements is night-time light luminosity. For this outcome, we have information about both the pre-election period and the variation observed after the election. The *growth* in night-time luminosity during an electoral cycle will therefore be our development outcome of interest.

Based on satellite images, the night-time luminosity data is increasingly used as a proxy for economic activity and development at the subnational level where GDP data is either unavailable or unreliable. Studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between night-time light intensity and subnational economic and human development indicators (Henderson et al., 2012; Costinot et al., 2016; Donaldson and Storeygard, 2016; Bruederle and Hodler, 2018). While there are some caveats involved in interpreting the effects of night lights intensity, it is a convincing multi-dimensional measure of development at the local level (Asher et al., 2021). Our fine-grained information on night-time luminosity, which is in the form of annual observations spanning the period 2002-2018, comes from the DSMP (2002-2013) and VIIRS (2014-2018) satellites. Both sources possess a double advantage: high geo-spatial resolution, and a procedure to correct for stray lights.

Our development outcome is measured at the village settlement level over each electoral cycle. At this level, we measure the change in night-light intensity from the year preceding an election to the year preceding the subsequent election. This ensures that the growth rate captures local economic changes attributable to the performance of elected representatives during their term in office. Growth in night-time lights over an electoral cycle thus serves as our key proxy for local development. Since our outcome variable (growth in night lights) is thus measured at

[14] Consider the first candidate for illustrative purposes. Our information bears not only on the participation of Sardar Shaukat Hayat in different election rounds but also on the possible participation of his relatives. In this instance, the only relative to have participated in elections is a son named Sardar Sikandar. Information was collected on the particular year in which this son contested or won an election.

a highly decentralized level while electoral data are available at the constituency level, we had to spatially match each village settlement in Punjab to its corresponding national assembly constituency. This linkage was implemented for the three most recent electoral cycles (2002, 2008, and 2013), which align with our night-light measurement periods (2002–2008, 2008–2013, and 2013–2018). Note that the constituency boundaries correspond to those demarcated by the Election Commission of Pakistan for each respective election year.

Finally, we have constructed several settlement-level measures to be used as pre-determined covariates in our analysis. Toward that purpose we looked at various sources to obtain data on time-invariant geographic characteristics. In addition to these geographic controls, we include historical built-up area density and night lights growth from the prior electoral cycle, which account for baseline development levels and pre-existing economic trends that could influence our outcomes. Further details on these measures and the data sources are supplied in Online Appendix A2.

4. The connection between political entrenchment and historic status

4.1 Defining entrenched political dynasties

The purpose of this paper is to assess the impact of (entrenched) political dynasties on local development. An immediate question that arises is how to define these dynasties given that we possess extremely rich information about the political past of the families of the candidates who participated in recent elections. Clearly, we need to consider the impact of families that have been consistently present on Pakistan's political scene over multiple generations so as to qualify as entrenched dynasties. Only those families could possibly evince the effects, positive or negative (effort relaxation by successor candidates), of political capital accumulation (see Section 1). The most obvious candidates are 'historic political families' which we define as families that have either held electoral office or were politically influential during the colonial era (i.e. prior to 1947). Because their power has thus been anchored in the colonial period, these families are likely to enjoy a comparatively high degree of political entrenchment and persistent electoral success.

Around 18 percent of the total political families in our dataset can be classified as 'historic' as per our definition.[15] To measure their political success over time and to verify whether it has been substantial and more or less continuous, a suitable variable is the number of *tenures* they have won since their entry into politics. This number is obtained by adding up the values recorded for all elections, on the understanding that for each election round the value is either one or zero. It is set to one if the family under concern had at least one winning candidate in the election round considered, and it is zero otherwise. Thus calculated, the number of tenures won provides us with an indicator of the longevity or persistence in power of political families. An alternative measure of successful political participation of dynastic families is based on the aggregation of all the *seats* won by any of their members in all the elections for which we have data. This implies that the index for a given election round will exceed 1 if several candidates belonging to the same family won a seat in different constituencies in a particular election round. When this alternative measure is used, a given total may thus be the result of different situations: (i) the seats won were spread thinly over a long period of time; (ii) at the other extreme, the seats won have been concentrated in a few (perhaps recent) election rounds; and (iii) intermediate situations. While (i) refer to historic families (historical anchoring is deep), and (ii) aim at families with a relatively wide geographical spread, (iii) are characterized by some mix of historical depth and spatial spread.

With the data at hand, we are able to look at the correlations between the historic or non-historic status of a family, on the one hand, and the number of tenures or the number of seats won by their members over all the elections held during the last century, on the other hand. The idea is that, if these correlations turn out to be high, we could dispense with a necessarily arbitrary definition of entrenched dynasties that would rely on the setting of a threshold number of tenures above which a family would be considered as an entrenched dynasty and below which it would not. Indeed, we would have solid empirical grounds to use the historical dummy as the explanatory variable in our impact assessment exercise.

4.2 The empirical link between political entrenchment and historic status

[15] These are essentially the most entrenched political families, typically those who have retained a strong electoral foothold since the pre-partition period. Online Appendix A3 gives a visual illustration for the historic Leghari family of south Punjab and shows that it has enjoyed electoral presence since 1921. Its members have continuously participated in successive electoral contests, and they have been represented in all legislatures during the last century, reaching a total of more than 80 parliamentary seats.

Dynastic entrenchment is expected to be manifested along the dimensions of both longevity and expansiveness of political power, perhaps more along the former than the latter dimension. To shed light on the former, Figure 3 shows the average number of distinct family tenures separately for historic dynasts and non-historic candidates. As the figure shows, historic dynasts exhibit greater longevity of power. On average, families to which historic dynasts belong have won 11 distinct tenures compared to only 4 tenures for non-historic candidates. Next, we verify this empirically using an RD design framework. Accordingly, in Figure 4, we show visual discontinuity plots for the number of distinct family tenures of winning candidates along the margin of victory between historic and non-historic elites in closely contested elections. There is a noticeable jump in the number of distinct tenures for historic dynasts who narrowly secured their electoral victories over non-historic candidates (see Panel A for the linear fit). A similar pattern is visible in the plot with quadratic fit (see Panel B). This evidence neatly demonstrates that historic elites enjoy a greater longevity of power, essentially remaining in power more or less continuously from the colonial era.

Furthermore, not only are historic families able to endure overtime, but they also have visible presence across different constituencies, which allows them to accumulate a greater number of legislative seats. This is evident from Figure 5 where we see that families to which historic dynasts belong have, on average, 15 seats compared to 3 seats for non-historic candidates (Panel A). Again, these differences can be formally verified in an RD design set-up (see the visual discontinuity plot in Panel B) and demonstrate the greater expansiveness of the power of historic elites. Taken together, the evidence in Figures 3, 4, and 5 shows that historic dynasts enjoy much greater political entrenchment than other political families. This said, the confidence intervals are noticeably larger when the relative strength of historic dynasts is measured in terms of seats than when measured in terms of tenures. This reflects the fact that some non-historic families have been rather successful in terms of horizontal expansion.

In the light of these results, we are justified in conducting our impact assessment analysis by distinguishing between historic and non-historic elites. In other words, the categories of entrenched dynasts and historic elites are overlapping so much that the latter can be considered as a sound proxy of the former, thereby providing us with a precise and non-arbitrary measure of (entrenched) dynastic power.

5. The negative development impact of historic dynasties

5.1 Preliminary evidence

In our sample there are a total of 444 seats for which elections were held across national assembly constituencies between 2002 and 2013. In the case of 59 seats (or 13 percent), a historic family candidate won over a non-historic candidate while the opposite situation was observed (the historic candidate was the runner-up) for 55 seats (or 12 percent). At the more spatially fine-grained '*settlement*' level that we use for our analysis, we find that 16,748 settlements (or 52 percent) belong to constituencies where a historic family candidate won over a non-historic candidate, while 15,652 settlements (or 48 percent) belong to constituencies where the opposite was true. Table 1 presents summary statistics for our core variables, including mean values and differences between settlements represented by historic versus non-historic candidates. As shown in the table, areas with historic family candidates exhibit a statistically significant difference in our development outcome. Notably, constituencies which elected candidates from historic political families between 2002 and 2013 experienced significantly slower growth in night-time light luminosity over the electoral cycle compared to the growth observed in constituencies where non-historic candidates were elected. In the next section, we verify this descriptive statistical result with the help of a rigorous empirical methodology—*the close elections regression discontinuity design.*

5.2 *Econometric approach*

To identify the effect of historic dynasts on development we make use of the close elections regression discontinuity design. As applied to our case, this approach approximates an ideal experiment that randomly assigns entrenched dynasts to settlements and then compares measures of economic development in settlements that have elected an entrenched dynast to those that have elected a non-entrenched candidate. The approximation works by restricting attention to close elections between a entrenched dynast and a non-entrenched candidate, where the exposure of settlements to entrenched dynasts is assumed to be "as good as random". Such an assumption has been used extensively in the empirical literatures on politics (Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Pettersson-Lidbom, 2008; Fiva and Smith, 2018) and development economics (Asher and Novosad, 2017; George, 2020; Prakash et al., 2019; Clots-Figueras, 2012). It is also well grounded in the established literature on applied econometrics (Eggers et al., 2015; Lee and Lemieux, 2010; Lee, 2008; Imbens and Lemieux, 2008).

In formally documenting the impact of dynasticism on economic development, we estimate the following local linear regression model with optimal bandwidth calculated according to Cattaneo et al. (2017):

$$Y_{ict} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \, 1(historic\ margin_{ct} > 0) + \beta_2 \, historic\ margin_{ct}$$
$$+ \beta_3 \, historic\ margin_{ct} \times 1(historic\ margin_{ct} > 0) + \delta X_i + \eta_d + \varepsilon_{ict} \qquad (1)$$

In the above specification, Y_{ict} denotes growth in night-time luminosity in settlement i, located within constituency c, over the electoral cycle t. $1(historic\ margin_{ct} > 0)$ is a binary variable indicating whether a historic dynast won in constituency c during electoral cycle t. The running variable $historic\ margin_{ct}$ is the vote-share difference between the historic dynast and the non- historic candidate in constituency c at the start of electoral cycle t. X_i is a vector of pre-determined settlement-level characteristics that are included as controls in our analysis. These include the following measures: pre-electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Finally, η_d are division-level fixed effects.[16] While controls and fixed effects are not required for identification in a close-elections RD design, they improve the precision of the estimates. The coefficient of interest in equation 1 is β_1. It measures the average difference in night-time luminosity growth between settlements located in constituencies where an historic dynast narrowly won and those where an historic dynast narrowly lost during the electoral cycle.

An important decision to make when implementing the close elections RD design is the choice of the bandwidth for margin of victory values that constitute a close election, in this instance the bandwidth around the entrenched dynast margin cut-off for computing the RD estimate. In making this choice we follow standard practice in the applied econometrics literature by adopting a data-driven approach for bandwidth selection. Specifically, we followed the suggestion in Cattaneo et al. (2019) and chose the approach that minimizes the mean squared error (MSE) of our local polynomial RD point estimator. We also show robustness of our results to using the coverage error rate (CER)-optimal bandwidth, which prioritizes proper confidence interval coverage over point estimate precision.

5.2 Central results

Using the close elections regression discontinuity research design specification as set out in equation (1), we estimate the effect of electing a historic dynast (compared to a non-historic candidate) on local economic development, measured by growth in night-time luminosity over

[16] The 'division' is an administrative unit that is smaller than a province but larger than a district. It is composed of a group of districts that are located within the same broad region.

an electoral cycle. As is standard practice in the literature, before presenting the RD estimates we first adduce visual evidence of the discontinuity in local economic development.

Figure 6 (Panels A–B) presents binned scatter plots of the unconditional mean of our development outcome (y-axis) against the historic dynast's margin of victory (x-axis). Observations to the right of the zero threshold represent constituencies narrowly won by historic dynasts, while those to the left represent constituencies narrowly lost. Panel A displays linear fitted lines on either side of the cutoff, while Panel B shows quadratic fits. Dashed lines in both panels indicate 95% confidence intervals. Both panels reveal a substantial negative discontinuity in night-time luminosity growth for settlements located in constituencies where historic dynasts narrowly defeated non-historic candidates. The lack of overlap between the confidence intervals on either side of the zero-vote margin threshold—along with the clear separation between them—provides strong evidence of a statistically significant negative effect of electing historic dynasts on local economic development over the electoral cycle.

We next present regression discontinuity estimates of the effect of electing a historic dynast on our measure of local economic development (growth in night-time luminosity during the electoral cycle in which a candidate is elected). Results are presented in columns 1–3 of Table 2. All columns use a triangular kernel-weighted local linear regression with optimal bandwidths calculated using Cattaneo et al. (2017). Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are reported in parentheses. Column 1 presents the estimate from the most parsimonious model that does not include any fixed effects or pre-determined covariates as controls. Columns 2–3 include division fixed effects, and Column 3 further incorporates the following pre-determined covariates: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Across all specifications, the RD estimates neatly confirm that in close electoral contests with a small margin of victory, settlements that elect historic dynasts exhibit significantly lower growth in night-time luminosity over the electoral cycle.

5.3 Results: the issue of validity

To demonstrate the validity of the close elections RD design in our setting, we need to carry out a number of tests. To begin with, we show that areas which narrowly elected an historic dynast are similar along a series of important development dimensions to areas which narrowly elected a non-historic candidate. They consist of pre-electoral cycle nightlights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability,

distance to river, and built-up area density. In Table 3, we carry out formal tests for continuity around the historic dynast margin cut-off of zero for each of these dimensions. As the estimates in this table show, none of the pre-determined covariates shows a discontinuity across this cut-off. For each covariate, the RD estimate in column (2) is insignificant and the confidence interval in column (4) includes zero. The smoothness of these important pre-determined covariates around the cut-off provides evidence against our 'historic dynast effect' being driven by pre-existing differences in development between areas which narrowly elected an historic dynast and those which did not.

Another important concern about the applicability of the close elections RD design to our setting is the possibility that the electoral system is being manipulated by entrenched dynasts in ways that systematically favor their election. If this were the case, we should observe a discontinuity in the density of our running variable around the entrenched dynast margin cut-off.[17] Accordingly, in Table 4 we perform both the McCrary (2008) and the Cattaneo et al. (2019) tests for detecting such discontinuity. Neither test appears to reject the assumption of continuity. Figure 7, which is based on the McCrary test and is visual analogue of Table 4 (the bold curves give the estimates while the dashed curves correspond to a 95% confidence interval), bears out the result that entrenched dynasts are not able to systematically manipulate the electoral process in ways that affect their chances of election.[18] In this connection, it is revealing that when asked about whether they have been persuaded to vote through bullying and threats, the overwhelming majority of respondents in a nationally representative electoral survey (FAFEN 2017) have answered negatively. This lends further support to the identifying assumption for our RD analysis.

5.4 Results: robustness checks

To assess the robustness of our results, we conduct several empirical tests. First, we perform a donut-hole analysis to examine whether our main RD estimates are sensitive to excluding observations near the historic dynast victory margin cutoff. In close-elections RD designs, observations closest to the cutoff are particularly susceptible to potential manipulation, which could undermine the validity of our estimates. This approach also helps evaluate whether our local polynomial estimates are driven by a small number of influential observations near the cutoff (Cattaneo et al., 2019). We test for three different donut holes with progressively

[17] If, close to the zero-margin threshold, a lot of historic dynasts appear to have won the contested seat, there is a suspicion that they could have manipulated the electoral process.
[18] The figure based on the other test is pretty similar and is therefore not displayed.

increasing sizes in terms of radius: a 0.5% radius, a 1.0% radius, and a 1.5% radius. As shown in Table 5, our core findings remain robust across all specifications—the RD estimates retain their negative sign and statistical significance regardless of the exclusion radius, confirming that our results are not driven by observations near the cutoff.

Next, following Asher and Novosad (2017), we assess the robustness of our main results to a *full sample polynomial specification* instead of the *local linear specification* represented by equation 1. Estimating the full sample polynomial specification involves regressing the outcome variable on a polynomial function of our running variable (historic dynast vote margin) across the entire sample of elections and estimating a discontinuity at the point where the running variable becomes positive. Taking cue from Asher and Novosad (2017), we use a third-order polynomial function of our running variable for the estimation. The results, presented in Table 6, show that the polynomial specification generates estimates that are similar in terms of size and statistical significance.

In our next robustness test we check the sensitivity of our results to the choice of an alternative kernel for weighting observations close to the historic dynast margin cutoff of zero. Accordingly, we re-estimate our close elections RD design specification (equation 1) using a 'rectangular' as opposed to a 'triangular' kernel. Using a rectangular kernel means that all observations within the optimally chosen bandwidth around the cutoff receive equal weight. This is different from the choice of a triangular kernel where the weighting of observations declines linearly as one approaches the bandwidth. Table 7 reports the results from the rectangular kernel estimation, which closely align with our baseline triangular kernel estimates. The negative and statistically significant effect of electing a historic dynast on our outcome variable persists, demonstrating that our findings are not sensitive to the choice of kernel weighting scheme.

Finally, we examine whether our results are robust to alternative bandwidth selection methods. While our primary analysis employs the mean squared error (MSE)-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico et al. (2014), we also test robustness using the coverage error rate (CER)-optimal bandwidth. Unlike the MSE-optimal bandwidth, which minimizes estimation variance, the CER-optimal bandwidth ensures that confidence intervals are correctly sized (i.e., they cover the true effect 95% of the time), even if this comes at the cost of slightly wider intervals. This trade-off makes the CER bandwidth a useful check for the reliability of our inference. As shown in Table 8, our estimates using CER-optimal bandwidth selection

method remain similar both in terms of size and statistical significance, supporting the robustness of our findings.

6. Exploring the underlying mechanism

6.1 Making sense of the results

The major result of this study can be formulated thus: retardation of growth and development in Pakistan, to the extent that it is caused by political factors, may be attributed to deeply entrenched dynasties corresponding to traditional elites with very old roots. If these families have been politically successful in the sense that they have been able to persist over a long period of time in spite of intense competition, they did not contribute to the local development of their area of contest compared to what their political rivals could achieve. How to account for these two findings and square them with the theories discussed at the start of this paper is the object of the present section. In a nutshell, our explanation rests on the effectiveness of the intergenerational transmissibility of political capital (and skills) and clientelistic strategies centered on the delivery of a particular type of private goods and services. Let us now provide some details and suggestive evidence in support of this explanation. The evidence relies not only on insights obtained from anthropological studies but also on two qualitative surveys, one small-scale and attuned to our sample and the other conducted on a wider scale but independent of our dataset.

Historic families typically consist of big landowning families. They have played a crucial role in the country's politics since, together with the military and the civil bureaucracy, they formed the ruling triad when Pakistan was born as a Muslim state (in 1947) under the impulse of the All India Muslim League.[19] Not surprisingly, they enjoyed initial advantages due to the various forms of support granted to them by the colonial authorities. They are not a homogeneous group, however, and two main categories can be distinguished: aristocratic and non-aristocratic families (Jan, 2019). The first group enjoyed high traditional status and special protection under the British.[20] Forming a large part of the class of local intermediaries upon whom the colonial state rested for indirect rule, they received generous landed gentry grants,

[19] While, initially, the main support of the League came from cities, Jinnah quickly understood that his party will not reach a pre-eminent political position if it did not extend its reach to big families in the countryside.

[20] They included the Muslim ashraf (elite) such as the Syeds (who claim descent from the Prophet's family and lead various Sufi shrines), the Rajputs (old warrior caste) and the Mughals (who claim descent from the erstwhile Mughal nobility).

official appointments, titles, and awards, especially in Punjab where grants of colony lands were massively awarded in the hope of creating a loyal native class of supporters (Cheema et al., 2005: 4; Ali, 1989). The relationship of this traditional elite with lower caste dependents was framed in the mode of strongly hierarchical patron-client ties, especially dominant in areas where land markets were inactive (Akhtar, 2008; Cheema et al., 2009; Javid, 2011). Its most dynamic members, though, proved able to invest in new lines of economic activities and in the education of their children who, in turn, became professionals (engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers). Even in these cases and when they resided in cities or towns, they retained a keen interest in their rural constituency and its (factional) politics (Ali, 1987, 2004).

As for the second category, lower in the caste hierarchy, it included traditionally self-cultivating family farmers who belonged to the 'agricultural tribes' or *biraderis* (clans or kinship groups). Numerically more important than the aristocratic families, they gained importance when some of them received land grants from the colonial government. With the peasant castes from which they emerged, they have shared kinship ties organized around an ideology of corporate solidarity, implying mutual obligations and reciprocity along horizontal lines. They have a strong sense of a middle-class identity, viewing themselves as distinct from the large landlords, whom they refer to as 'bade zamindars' (big landowners) and 'jagirdars' (feudal/estate owners). It is under this banner that they sought access to the state, "using both clientelism and populist mobilization to demand resources and organizing under their leadership small and poor peasants with whom they share ties of kinship" (Jan, 2019: 187). Their position was reinforced under the rule of General Ayub Khan (1958-1969) who decided to patronize the upper peasantry so as to counterbalance the power of aristocratic landowners. In the Punjab province, in particular, self-cultivating farmers benefited immensely from the green revolution package of irrigation, fertilizers, and high-yielding seed varieties (Jan, 2019: 188; Martin, 2016: 122-3). In sum, non-aristocratic landed families gradually emerged as a genuine political force in the countryside, able to bargain politically and to connect with local bureaucrats and officials with a view to obtaining advantages for their factions and *biraderis* (Zaidi, 2015, 2019; Martin, 2018; Mohmand, 2019).

Our narrative is based on the central idea that historic families started with a great advantage thanks not only to gifts of landed property and modern agricultural inputs but also to privileged access to the state apparatus. It is this access that has enabled them to play a pivotal role as "gatekeepers of the state". In the words of Mohmand (2019), the historic landed elite are "the channel through which the state delivers to its rural citizens", being the villagers' main

contact with the police and the courts among other state institutions (p. …). Here is therefore the core element of the political capital which historic families have been able to pass on to subsequent generations together with the political skills required to deal with key agents in the administration. To measure the importance of this political capital for ordinary people, we must bear in mind their distrust in formal institutions, which they tend to consider as distant and prone to making arbitrary decisions in favor of well-to-do and well-connected people. If (formal) rules exist against such arbitrariness, they do not believe that they are impartially enforced, hence the need they feel for a protector or intermediary able to defend their interests and make their voices audible. Politicians possessing a good network of valuable connections to the state apparatus are thus particularly appealing to these vulnerable voters. For instance, poor voters think that landed patrons "can affect the manner in which the police choose to deal with complaints", being persuaded that "service delivery is dependent on the will and proactivity" of these powerful intermediaries, "and that the cost of such delivery is usually deference and obedience" (Mohmand, 2019).[21]

By choosing to respond to the needs of many voters for economic and physical security, historic dynasts have given precedence to the delivery of private livelihood-protecting goods and services over the delivery of private and public livelihood-enhancing goods and services. Insofar as the latter and not the former contributes to people's social and economic emancipation and to local economic growth, the political strategy followed by these dynasts is antagonistic to development. Upon this reading, rather than being caused by a lack of effort in the office, underdevelopment in areas dominated by historic families appears to arise from their choice of a particular strategy for attracting voters. That strategy reconciles their objective of long-term maintenance in power with the satisfaction of the poor voters' demand for insurance against economic and physical vulnerabilities. In the literature, emphasis is typically put on services such as the supply of short-term consumption loans aimed at tiding over the lean season, facing income shortfalls, or meeting social and medical expenditures. Yet, there are other essential livelihood-protection services which, being less easy to measure, are often

[21] Here is how Nicholas Martin (2016: 33) describes the behavior and perceptions of reality among the common people dependent upon big traditional landlords: "People's mentality was such that …. [they] would completely discount a poor politician who didn't campaign with a large convoy of cars and cohort of gunmen". Common people worship the outward signs of power and wealth and believe that only the rich and powerful can effectively deliver patronage. Moreover, most of them are illiterate and would therefore be unable to deal with the bureaucratic paperwork that characterized most encounters with the state. unlike traditional landlords, they do not have connections with influential officials that would allow them to deliver patronage.

ignored. They are often mentioned in social studies (Martin, 2016; Mohmand, 2019), and they include the acquisition of identity cards allowing access to subsidized subsistence goods, the provision of help to get admission into a hospital, protection against the local police and legal defense in local court cases, particularly those involving land disputes. All of these services share the characteristic of creating a bias in favor of recurring private benefits or emergency help rather than one-off long-term benefits (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2012).[22]

6.2 Complementary evidence from two surveys

Although they are rarely measured in large-scale field surveys, livelihood-protecting services are partly covered by a representative constituency-level survey of voters conducted by the Free And Fair Election Network (FAFEN) of Pakistan. To substantiate our narrative, we selected questions from the FAFEN survey that offer reasonably good proxy measures of some of the variables we are after. Specifically, we examine three sets of questions: those bearing on the determinants of voting decisions, those measuring trust in formal institutions, and those investigating the role of informal arrangements for dispute resolution. We are interested in whether the responses of the sampled voters differ significantly between constituencies dominated by historic dynasts and non-historic candidates.

Using this dataset, we construct binary outcome variables for questions on trust in state institutions, voting determinants, and informal dispute resolution. Each variable equals 1 for a "Yes" response and 0 for "No." Our independent variable is a binary indicator for constituencies dominated by historic elites, defined as electing a historic dynast in at least two of three contemporary elections (2002, 2008, 2013) that comprise our dataset. We then estimate logistic regressions to assess the relationship between these outcomes and historic elite dominance. All models are run at the respondent level and the data comes from 2016. Results are reported in Tables 9 and 10. Table 9 displays the average marginal effects obtained from regressions estimating the effects of historic elite dominance on voting decisions and dispute resolution while Table 10 displays the same effects on trust in the parliament and various judicial institutions. Both tables display estimates with and without controls. Despite the inclusion of controls, however, we must be cautious in terms of interpreting the results as causal.

[22] These authors call them 'inferior' consumption goods. They favor select poor groups of voters in an implicit quid pro quo for their political support. As illustration, they cite access to employment in public works, subsidized food, low-income housing or help in coping with personal emergencies.

It is striking that the coefficients of our independent variable (proxying for dominance by historic elites) are all highly significant (at 99% confidence level) and have the expected sign. The results can be regrouped into three categories. First, voting in constituencies dominated by historic dynasts is significantly more influenced by traditional leaders, such as tribal chiefs and historic families. Second, voting in these constituencies is more determined by concerns of physical security, as illustrated by the importance given to protection in front of the police and the courts. Furthermore, people in these constituencies tend to also express a stronger preference for resolving their personal or collective disputes through panchayats which, in Punjab, is the main informal dispute resolution institution. By contrast, they are less influenced by the availability of public goods, as epitomized by local development projects. Third, although mistrust in formal institutions is distressingly high in Pakistan, it is significantly more pronounced in dynastic constituencies, whether measured as trust in the parliament or in the higher-level rungs of the judiciary (the District Court, the High Court, and the Supreme Court).

Our next set of evidence is more reliable and fine-tuned in the sense of being better probed into and verified. It consists of complementary information, which we ourselves designed and collected ex post (after we took cognizance of our econometric results) about a fraction of our own sample of political families. Before presenting and discussing the new results, we provide details about the design and implementation of this complementary survey. The survey, inspired by the available literature on politics in Punjab, included a mix of closed and open-ended questions to balance comparability and nuance. They were designed to assess the following dimensions (see Online Appendix A4 for details): (a) the nature of the influence exerted by political families; (b) their sources of power (e.g., landownership, patronage networks, coercion), and (c) the strategies they employ to maintain dominance (e.g., coercion, dispute resolution, provision of services). The survey was focused on 45 leading political families randomly selected from our dataset and comprising both historic (23) and non-historic (22) elites, with each family comprising multiple members active in politics through blood or marital ties. Implementation was entrusted to experts on local politics, and the respondents were local field reporters from the Jang-Geo News Group, Pakistan's largest print and electronic media network. These reporters possess deep expertise in local politics, having covered elections and political developments in their respective districts for extended periods. Their long-term presence in specific districts allowed them to acquire granular, first-hand knowledge of local political dynamics. Finally, to ensure data reliability, we implemented several consistency checks. First, we verified that reporters were not affiliated with the dynasties or their

strongholds. Second, we cross-validated the findings with academic research, election results, historic patterns, and qualitative accounts of the constituencies. Third, we conducted random phone interviews with alternative local informants for external validation.[23]

The most important results for our purpose are presented in Figure 8. First, historically entrenched political elites, which are more likely to reside in rural areas, were overwhelmingly (96%) big zamindar families whose power has been derived from traditional sources of authority (religious, tribal chieftaincy, etc.). In contrast, only 45% of non-historic families wielded one form or another of traditional authority. In addition, the source of power of historic families appears to lie in strong personal vote banks rather than in a political party. According to our local experts, this is the case for more than half (52%) of historic families, as opposed to just 14% for non-historic families. This finding ties in well with qualitative research highlighting the dependence of political parties on such entrenched families for electoral success.[24]

On the other hand, the survey strongly validated our hypothesis that the strategy of historic families to attract voters is mostly based on the delivery of livelihood-protecting services, which include assistance in dispute resolution, protection from harassment by state agents, and help in legal matters. We thus find that about two-thirds of these families (65%) are reported to derive electoral support primarily from such services, compared to less than one-fourth (23%) for non-historic families. When this indicator is disaggregated with the help of more precise questions addressing specific aspects of such services, the above contrast is unambiguously confirmed. For instance, 78% of historic families are known to provide protection against the arbitrary exercise of state power (e.g., police harassment, land grabs, extortion), compared to only 23% for non-historic families. Similarly, the former appears to be significantly more likely than the latter to offer their informal mediation in the case of disputes (83% vs hardly more than 30%) as well as their assistance when formal courts are involved (57% vs less than 30%). Finally, we argued earlier that the entrenched position of historic families is closely tied to their control over the local state apparatus, enabling them to facilitate access to state services for their constituents. Evidence from our expert survey confirms this interpretation: 57% of historic

[23] Note also that respondents were anonymized to encourage honest responses, and the research purpose was clearly communicated at the outset.

[24] In local political parlance, these families are often termed “electables”—candidates with high chances of winning regardless of party affiliation.

families are described as gatekeepers, compared to 23% for non-historic families, and 79% of the former are reported to assist voters in accessing public services, versus 41% of non-historic families.

Overall, therefore, the expert survey paints a consistent picture which aligns well with both our empirical analysis and the insights from qualitative research on Pakistani electoral politics. Historic political families derive their power from traditional sources of authority, rely heavily on personal vote banks, and maintain dominance through the provision of livelihood-protecting services. To understand the pivotal role of such services, the pervasive presence of corruption needs to be borne in mind. In particular, the use of fake police cases and the possibility to bribe judges in formal courts, are so widespread that there is a name in Urdu to designate them: "thana ketcheri kee siyasat", which can be translated as "the politics of police and courts". When police officers or judges do not comply with requests coming from powerful politicians, the threat of a forced transfer to another locality and their replacement by more loyal officers is hanging on their heads and is rather easily executed in the case of resistance (see Section 2). Since ordinary constituents do not have the ability and the wherewithal to counter the money power and the influence of the elites, they attach a great value to the mediation services offered by local Big Men with the required connections to the state apparatus (Scott, 1976). Hence their voting support for these influential people or for the politicians they are related to.

The foregoing characterization implies that most, but not all historical families follow a social status-quo strategy based on the courting of poor and vulnerable voters. The minority of patrons originating from the aforementioned self-cultivating castes presumably behave in more progressive ways, relying on horizontal patronage of the type described by Fafchamps (2016) and Cruz et al. (2017). In these instances, the core of a network is built on bonds of kinship with the effect of motivating its political brokers to exert more effort on behalf of the candidates. Involvement of the networks' heads in politics may then not discourage the supply of public goods because they act on behalf of a broad and homogeneous entity.

6.3 Evidence for an anti-development bias of the historic elite

As shown above, traditional elites, such as historic families in Pakistan, follow political strategies focused on the provision of physical and economic security to poor and vulnerable people. Although socially useful in the context of pervasive corruption observed in Pakistan, the associated services neglect the long-term improvement of the poor's living conditions. This is especially so because they are supplied on a recurrent and discretionary basis rather than in

the form of a collective good, e.g., an organization aimed at defending the rights of the poor in their dealings with the state bureaucracy. The poor are thus made individually and chronically dependent on a political patron selling emergency assistance in return for political support. They are locked in a status quo situation where they are deprived of any prospect of long-term economic emancipation.

In the same logic, the historic elite may deliberately thwart efforts to promote universal education, as argued in Bourguignon and Verdier (2000). There is evidence that such a mechanism is also at work in Pakistan, and in the Punjab province in particular. Martin (2016, p. 87) thus explicitly mentions the tendency of traditional landlords to oppose the (secular) education of their dependents lest they should seek emancipation and develop "unrealistic expectations" and thereby cause a shortage of cheap agricultural labor. They prefer to encourage Islamic education, which inculcates moral values through the reading of the Quran (p. 87). They may go as far as diverting school buildings from their intended function by using them as cowsheds, farm buildings, accommodation for some relatives, and the like (p. 133). Moreover, schools are often of poor quality because of commissions given to contractors. Teachers themselves are then "ghost teachers" who rarely turn up for their duty, and place false entries into the attendance registers (p. 88). Their time and energies are then diverted to other uses that serve the interests of their patrons who protect them from disciplinary action.[25]

These circumstances are far from exceptional: the phenomenon of "ghost schools" is well-known and a survey (1998) found those schools to number over 5,000 in a single division (Zahab, 2020: 82). Because the enumerators were pre-announced in the selected villages, the figures provided by this survey were obviously underestimated. Being based on unannounced inspections, a later survey proves more reliable (Gazdar, 2000). It concludes that 38% of the sampled rural schools are functional, 33% are partly functional, and 29% are dysfunctional. Because the requirements for being functional are relatively modest, these findings paint a bleak picture of the situation. Furthermore, there exists a wide discrepancy between enrolment and attendance: for around a quarter of the schools which were opened at the time of the survey,

[25] In some cases, primary school teacher posts are sold by politicians and bureaucrats for large amounts of money, thus inducing the beneficiaries to take side jobs to repay their loans (Hasnain, 1988: 137).

less than 50% of the enrolled pupils were in attendance and less than half of the schools opened had pupil attendance rates of 75% or more (p. 52).[26]

Finally, Malik and Mirza (2022) argue that across Pakistani Punjab the religious elite, which are guardians of pilgrimage sites (called shrines) and all belong to historic dynasties, tend to discourage popular education because it would undermine their power. Using a historical panel of literacy spanning over a century (1901-2011), they show that areas with a greater concentration of shrines experienced a substantially retarded growth in literacy. Unsurprisingly, the problems afflicting schools also exist for health units and dispensaries, post offices, and other public services, which may explain why Pakistan performs so poorly on social outcomes, controlling for income levels and growth (Easterly, 2003).

6.4 Segmented political markets

There is no reason to believe that the entrenched historic dynasties are more prone to use coercion to enlist voters than non-historic families. As pointed out earlier (see Subsection 5.3), people do not complain about intimidation and bullying when they decide whom to vote, and it is rather fair to say that elections in Punjab Province are "genuinely contested" or non-coerced (Mohmand, 2019: 6, 251).[27]

Where non-historic families differ from historic families is in their specialization in the delivery of livelihood-enhancing goods and services, including public goods. Foremost among the latter are rural roads and, to a lesser extent, development projects based on improved irrigation. As seen in Table 9, voting is more likely to be influenced by the prospect of development projects in non-historic than historic constituencies. Also revealing is the fact that the largest proportion of the special development funds allotted by the central government, which are explicitly required to be earmarked for infrastructural investment, have been spent on roads, more particularly small feeder and farm-to-market roads (Hasnain, 2008: 141; Malik, 2019: 5).[28] Initiated by General Zia in a logic of political clientelism (see Section 2), these funds are awarded to members of provincial and national assemblies with a view to helping them satisfy their supporters at very localized levels. It is not coincidental that control over the use

[26] Another worthy observation is that teachers may in some cases be willing to surrender as much as half their salaries in order to escape the duty of attending school. They are essentially happy with the reward consisting of the lumpsum pension of 2-3 lakhs that they receive at the end of their careers (p. 80).
[27] The same observation holds for Maharashtra state in India (Anderson et al., 2015).
[28] Going by recent evidence for India (Asher and Novosad, 2020), the impact of rural roads on economic growth is modest, however. The short time interval considered by the authors (four years after road construction) may partly explain their disappointing results.

of this money is discretionary and escapes any audit (Cheema et al., 2005: 13, 27). As for private goods and services primarily supplied by non-historic politicians, they take the form of jobs (including fake ones), licenses, contracts, fake high school matriculation certificates, etc. (Hasnain, 2008: 142-5; Martin, 2016: 67, 83-6, 132; Wilder, 2009: 34).[29]

Clearly, both types of political families, those which are deeply entrenched historic dynasties and those which are not, are connected to the state machinery. This is expected given the political setup of the country and the successive reforms intended for reducing the dependence of local politicians on the support of bureaucracy (see Section 2). However, while historic families use their enduring connections to maintain their power by providing basic security to their voters, non-historic families are more eager to respond to the demands of dynamic elements in the population of their constituency, hence their ability to better contribute to local growth and development. More precisely, because the penetration of the state by historic families is so deep that they can bribe or influence key officers in the administration, they have a comparative advantage in delivering livelihood-protecting services to people particularly exposed to the harmful effects of arbitrary decisions by public agents. For these people, physical and economic security prevails over objectives of social and economic emancipation. On the other hand, in comparison to historic families, the links to the state of political families of more recent origin tend to involve more "legal" layers or functions of the officialdom as they are driven by their willingness to leverage special development funds for the purpose of delivering public goods. These are more attractive to voters tempted by opportunities for upward mobility.

The pieces of the puzzle arising from our results can now be put together. The political market appears to be segmented. As we have just seen, this is verified on the supply side: depending on their comparative advantages, the two types of families deliver two different sorts of goods and services in exchange for votes. Segmentation is also found on the demand side of the market. Should demand be homogeneous, one form of delivery would be gradually replaced by the other while what we observe is their coexistence instead. The fact is that, as has been powerfully argued half a century ago by Scott (1976), some people, because they are poor and highly vulnerable to shocks, prefer to place themselves, or remain, under the dependence and protection of a powerful patron able to guarantee their subsistence or security (see Anderson et

[29] Illustrations of fake jobs abound in Martin's book. For instance, he tells the story of a domestic servant of the younger brother of a newly emerging (Gondal) political patron. He was placed into the payroll of the South-Korean company Daewoo, although he never actually worked for the company. The arrangement basically allowed his master to have a servant for free, and, as the salary was quite high, the master also appropriated part of it for himself (Martin, 2016: 85, footnote 89).

al., 2015, for evidence related to Maharashtra state, India). Other people, because they are less poor or more risk-taking and entrepreneurial, are eager to improve their lot and wish to enter into the network or the voting bloc of a more progressive political patron.

When a political market is segmented in the way we suggest, electoral outcomes hinge upon social and economic characteristics of the constituencies, such as the extent of land inequality, the incidence of poverty, and social stratification (all variables which we do not measure). Obviously, we do not then expect that one category of elite, entrenched dynasts or non-dynasts, will systematically win in all or most places. Moreover, insofar as the social makeup of a constituency is often mixed, we should not be surprised that electoral contests can be quite close between the two categories. This implication is precisely what enabled us to use the methodology of close elections regression discontinuity.

Finally, it is worth noting that the way the political market functions in our area of study resembles the two-party system often described in the political economy literature, whether based on deterministic or probabilistic voting (see Mueller, 2003: Chaps. 11-12). One major adaptation is nevertheless required: instead of two political parties proposing two different ideological or policy platforms to their voters, what we have are two different types of political families (acting through the shells of two parties) proposing two sorts of services in exchange for votes.

7. Conclusion

The major conclusion of this study is that deeply entrenched dynasties made of historic families whose origin dates back to colonial times tend to dominate the political landscape of Pakistan (Punjab Province). Although these dynasties are faced with the competition of non-historic families, they are comparatively worse in delivering local growth and development, and yet they persist. Given the context of competitive clientelism, the reason behind their persistence cannot be found in their absolute control over their constituents. Their ability to cater to their constituents' demand for physical and economic security in the face of arbitrary state power seems to be a much more pertinent explanation. And because the associated services are provided on a recurrent and discretionary basis, they are not conducive to development: they dispense ad hoc, one-off assistance at the price of personal dependence.

Another lesson to draw is that a critical component of a politician's political capital lies in the depth and range of the connections established with the state apparatus. Hence, political capital does not only serve as a direct determinant of electoral success -an effect achieved

through assets that influence the probability of winning an election (such as a network of campaign supporters, the reputation of the family, and the like) –, but it also has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the politician's actions while in power.

Finally, given the context of political competition in Pakistani Punjab, the belief that Pakistan's political system is extremely non-competitive appears misguided. The clue behind the paradox is plausibly the segmentation of the political market and the strong domination of one segment by deeply entrenched dynasties with control over the state apparatus. This is our reading of the following statement: "while Punjab's politics appears competitive as members of dynastic factions aggressively compete against each other using different party platforms, they are simultaneously uncompetitive because the dynasties, and the pursuit of their interests, trump other concerns in political party, public policy and development-related matters" (Cheema et al., 2013: 1).

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Figure 1: A timeline of elections, 1921-2018

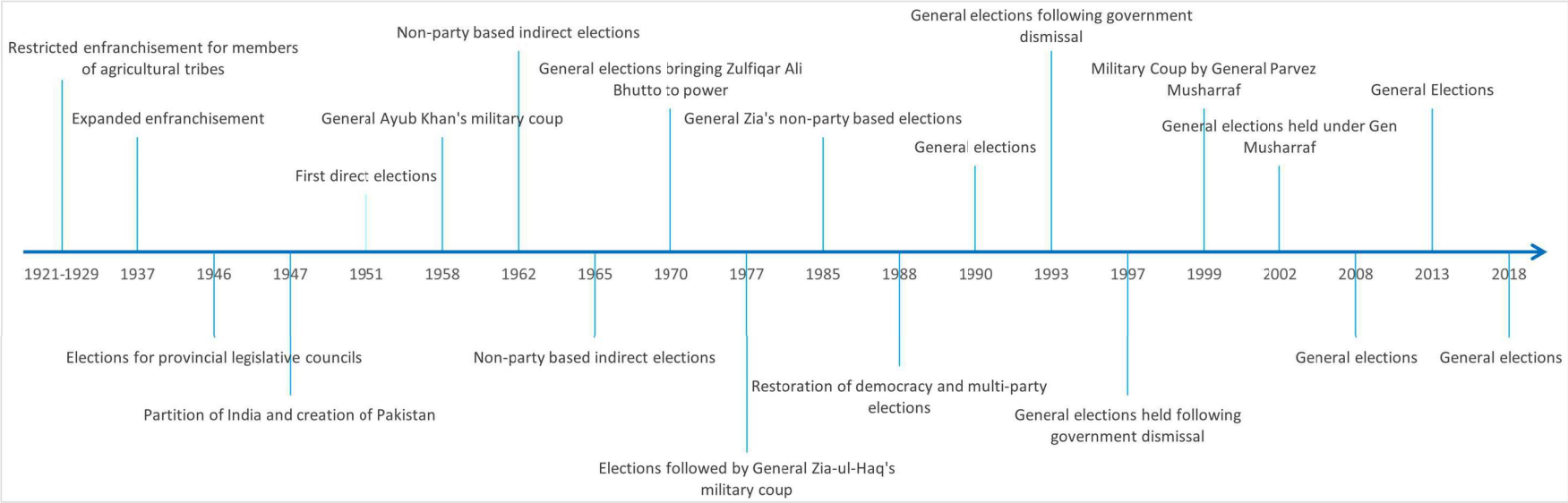


Figure 2: Historic Elites and Longevity of Power (Bar Chart)

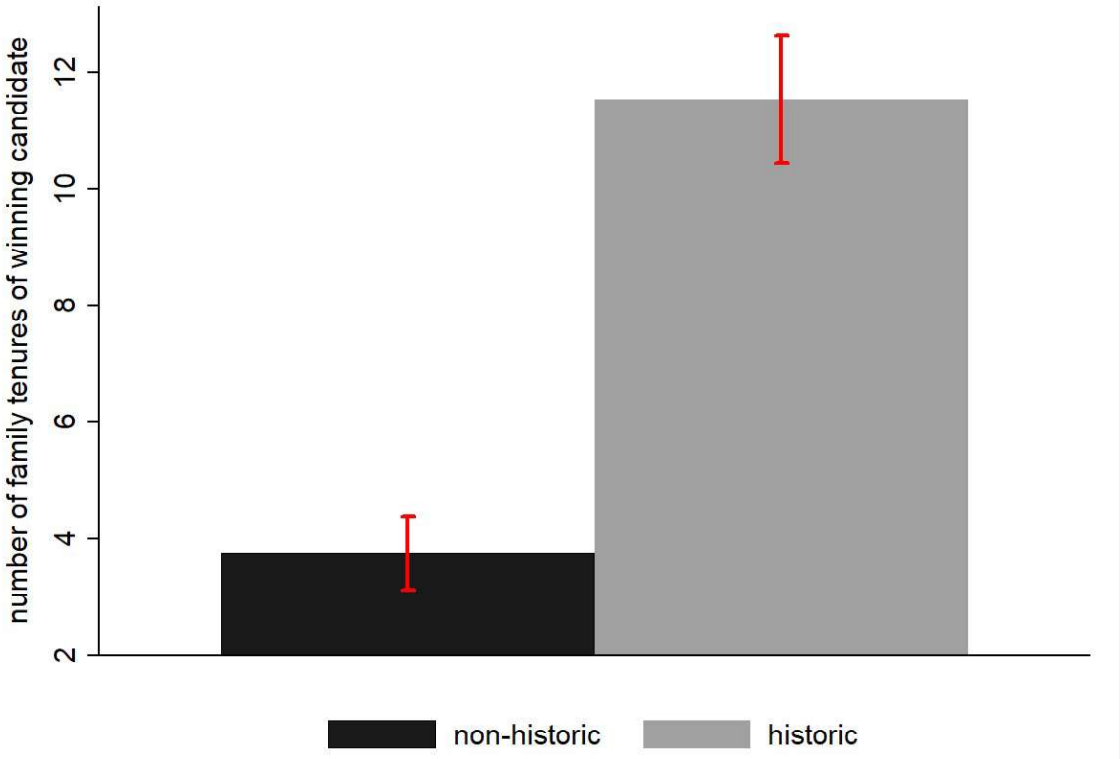
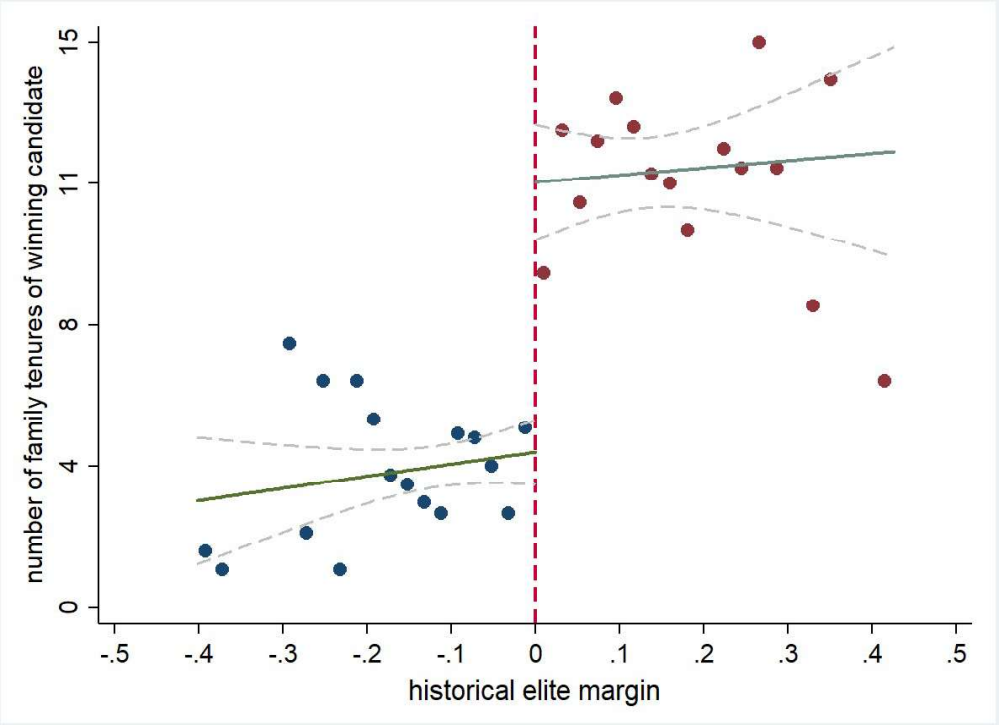


Figure 3: Historic Elites and Longevity of Power (RD Plots)

Panel A: Linear Fit



Panel B: Quadratic Fit

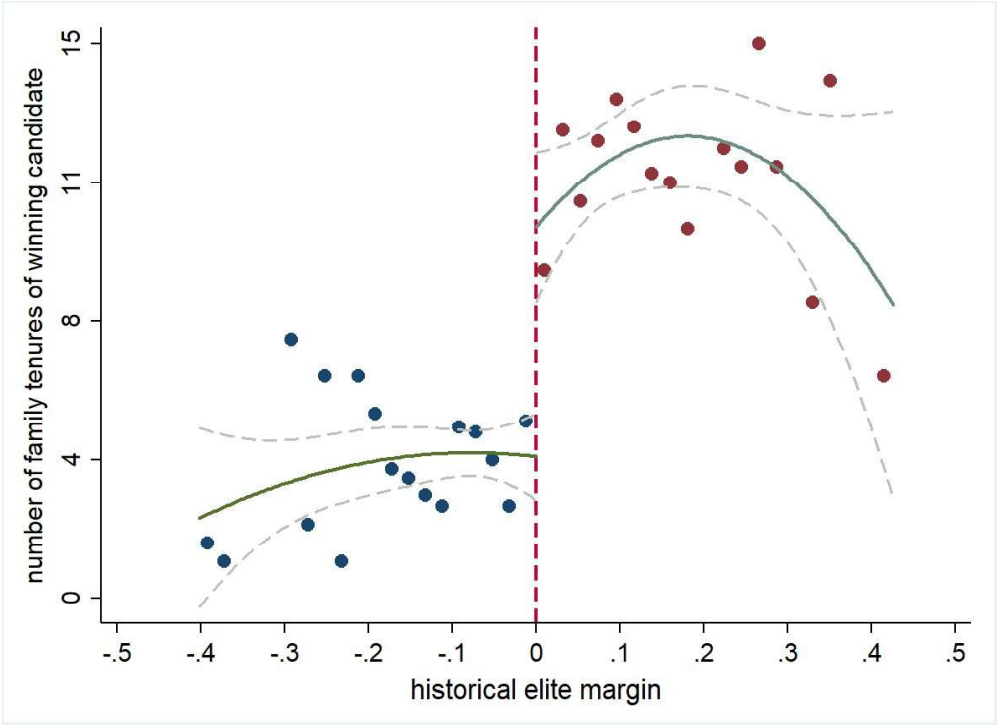
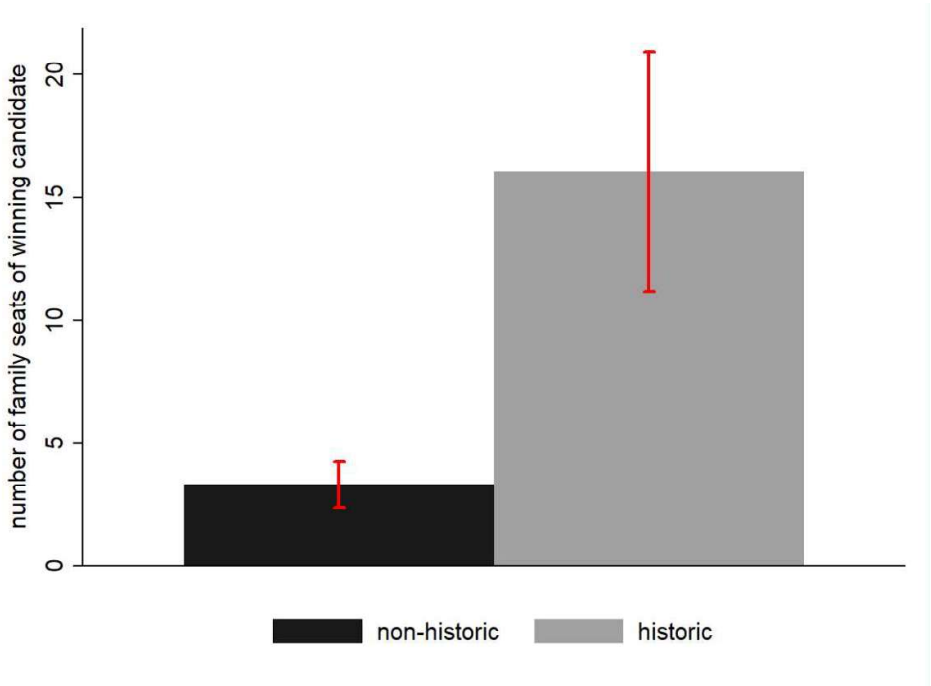


Figure 4: Historic Elites and Expansiveness of Power (Bar Chart and RD Plot)

Panel A: Bar Chart



Panel B: RD Plot

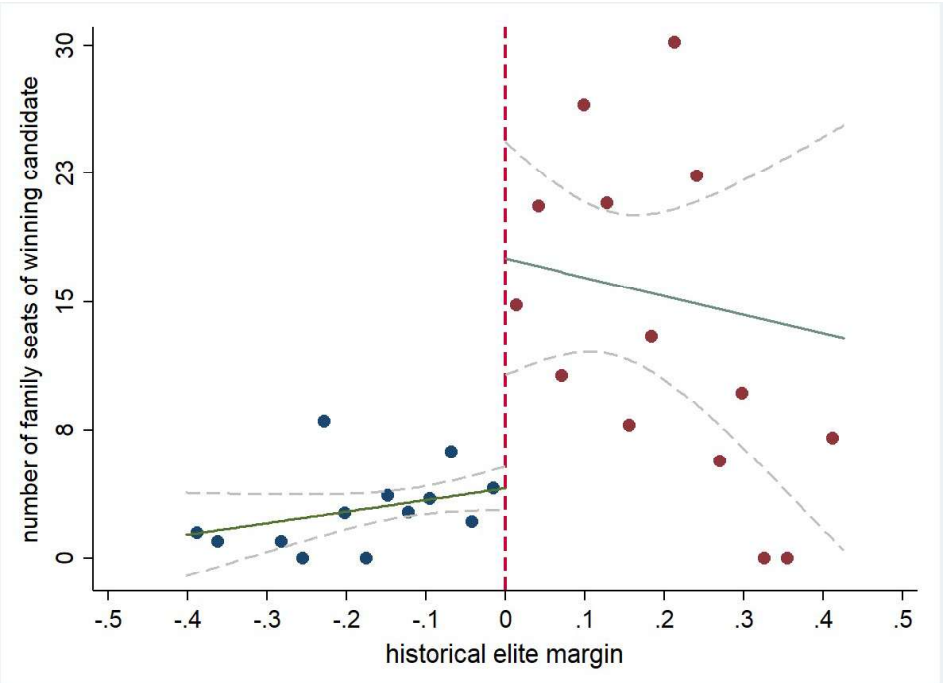
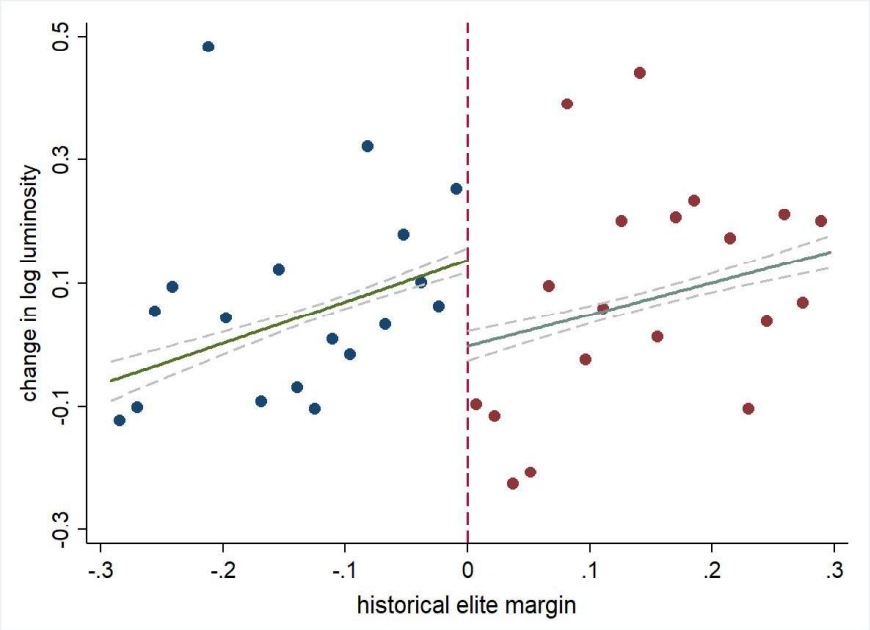


Figure 5: Luminosity growth and historic dynast vote margin (RD Plots)

Panel A: Linear Fit



Panel B: Quadratic Fit

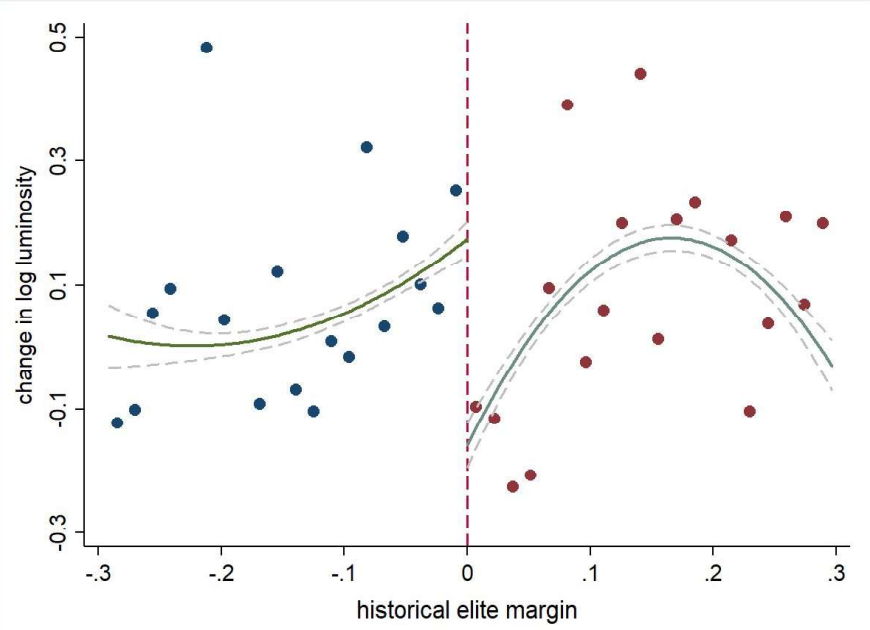


Figure 6: Density of the running variable (historic dynastic vote margin)

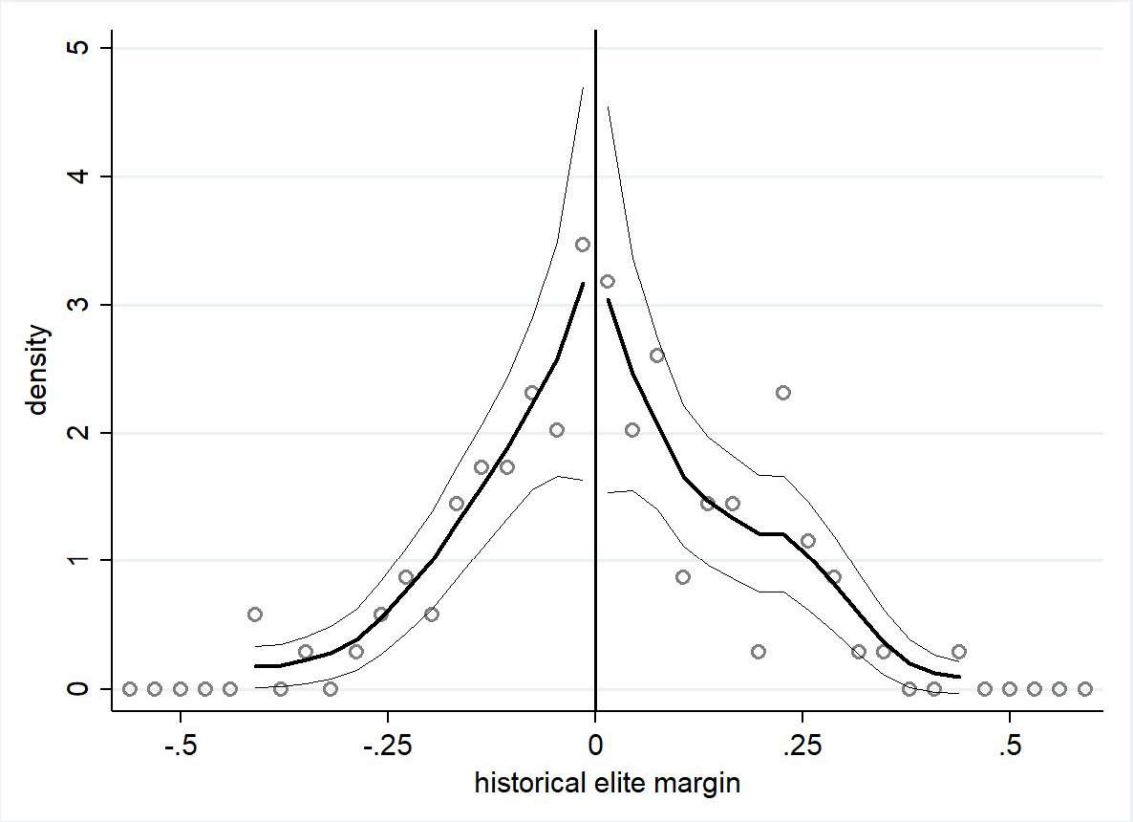


Figure 7: Evidence based on original qualitative survey

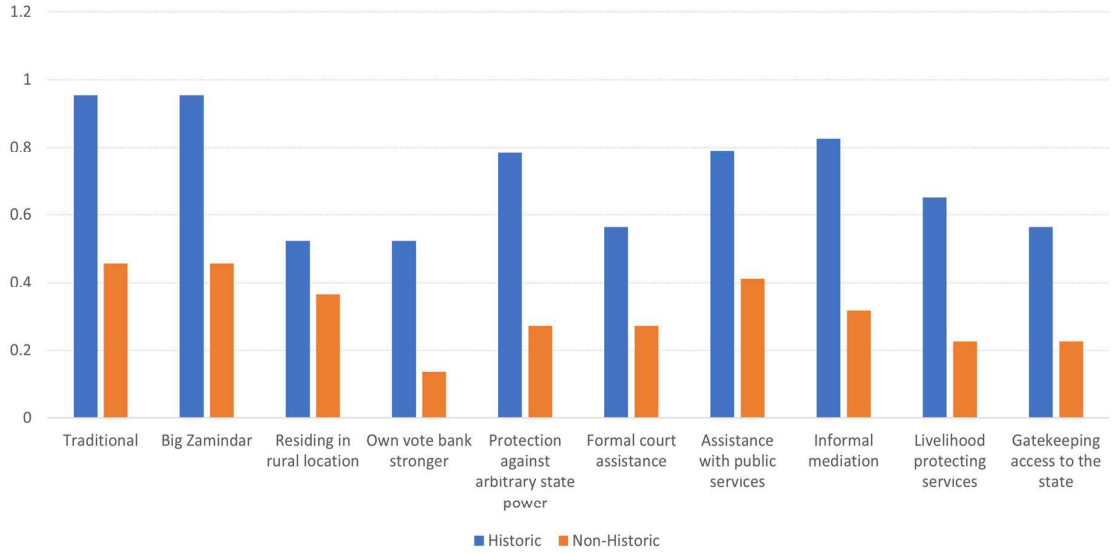


Table 1: Average differences in night-time luminosity growth between historic elites and non-historic candidates

Variable Name	Sample Mean	Mean Difference
(1)	(2)	(3)
growth in night lights during the electoral cycle (*all electoral rounds*)	0.017	-0.289***
		(0.0188)
growth in night lights during the electoral cycle (2002-2008)	-0.024	-0.203***
		(0.026)
growth in night lights during the electoral cycle (2008-2013)	-0.107	-0.123***
		(0.025)
growth in night lights during the electoral cycle (2013-2018)	0.352	-0.408***
		(0.056)

Notes: This table presents summary statistics for the development outcome used in our empirical analysis. We restrict the sample to settlements belonging to constituencies with close elections (margin of victory <= 5%) where the top two candidates were historic and non-historic. Column (2) reports the sample mean of each variable and Column (3) reports the difference in means (along with statistical significance) of each variable between the historic and non-historic groups. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1

Table 2: Effect of historical elites on growth in night time luminosity

	Depvar: settlement level night lights growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Historical Elite	-0.370***	-0.405**	-0.353**
	(0.114)	(0.151)	(0.143)
N	14,666	14,666	14,666
R^2	0.022	0.039	0.047
RD bandwidth	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal
Specification	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear

Notes: The table presents regression discontinuity estimates of the effect of electing a historical elite politician on growth in nighttime luminosity during their electoral term (e.g., 2008–2013 for a candidate elected in 2008). The sample compares settlements in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those where they narrowly lost. All columns use triangular kernel-weighted local linear regression with optimal bandwidths calculated using Cattaneo et al. (2017). Columns 2–3 include division fixed effects, and Column 3 adds pre-determined controls: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

Table 3: Formal continuity-based analysis for pre-determined covariates

Variable	MSE-Optimal Bandwidth	RD Estimator	Robust Inference		Number of Observations
			p-value	Conf. Int.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
			Panel A: settlement level characteristics		
night lights growth in prior electoral cycle	0.102	0.091	0.240	[-0.063, 0.244]	14666
ruggedness	0.091	0.423	0.815	[-3.214, 4.060]	9248
long-run mean rainfall	0.096	-151.406	0.322	[-456.706, 153.894]	9248
long-run mean temperature	0.093	0.726	0.476	[-1.314, 2.767]	9248
soil suitability	0.086	-0.382	0.115	[-0.860, 0.097]	9248
wheat suitability	0.100	-1785.891	0.151	[-4252.586, 680.803]	10022
rice suitability	0.116	-146.346	0.780	[-1194.991, 902.299]	10711
distance to river	0.069	7.071	0.487	[-13.424, 27.567]	7950
built-up area density	0.092	0.846	0.804	[-6.010, 7.701]	9248
			Panel B: candidate level characteristics		
no. of past elections won	0.141	0.152	0.820	[-1.184, 1.488]	72
no. of past elections contested	0.126	0.014	0.988	[-1.836, 1.863]	68

Notes: This table presents regression discontinuity estimates of the effect of electing a historical elite politician on pre-determined covariates. Panel A compares settlement-level characteristics in constituencies where a historical elite candidate narrowly won to those in constituencies where a historical elite candidate narrowly lost. Panel B compares characteristics of the winning candidates in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly lost. All estimates are derived using triangular kernel-weighted local linear regression, with optimal bandwidths calculated following the methodology of Cattaneo et al. (2017). Standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.

Table 4: Tests for discontinuity in the running variable at the threshold

	McCrary	CJM
	(1)	(2)
T-stat	-0.11	-0.26
p-value	0.91	0.8

Notes: The 'McCrary' column reports the results of the McCrary (2008) manipulation test; the 'CJM' column reports results of the Cattaneo et al. (2017) test. Both procedures test the null hypothesis of a discontinuity in the distribution of the running variable (historical elite vote margin) at the cutoff.

Table 5: Robustness of the historical elites effect to the exclusion of donut hole observations

	Depvar: settlement level night lights growth					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Historical Elite	-0.262**	-0.285**	-0.291**	-0.325**	-0.250**	-0.375*
	(0.123)	(0.140)	(0.131)	(0.160)	(0.104)	(0.217)
Donut Hole Radius	0.5%		1.0%		1.5%	
N	12,784	12,784	12,230	12,230	8,708	8,708
R^2	0.038	0.045	0.042	0.049	0.033	0.043
RD bandwidth	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal
Specification	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear

Notes: The table presents regression discontinuity (RD) estimates from a robustness exercise that excludes observations very close to the historical elite vote margin of victory cutoff. Observations within donut hole radii of 0.5%, 1%, and 1.5% of the cutoff are excluded separately. The sample compares settlements in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those where they narrowly lost. All columns use triangular kernel-weighted local linear regression with optimal bandwidths calculated using Cattaneo et al. (2017). Columns 1, 3, and 5 include division fixed effects, while Columns 2, 4, and 6 add pre-determined controls: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

Table 6: Robustness of the historical elites effect using a full sample polynomial specification

	Depvar: settlement level night lights growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Historical Elite	-0.407***	-0.351***	-0.351***
	(0.114)	(0.124)	(0.127)
N	32,400	32,400	32,400
R^2	0.011	0.018	0.021
Specification	Polynomial	Polynomial	Polynomial

Notes: The table presents regression discontinuity estimates from a robustness exercise using a full sample polynomial specification to examine the effect of electing a historical elite politician on growth in nighttime luminosity during their electoral term (e.g., 2008–2013 for a candidate elected in 2008). The sample compares settlements in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those where they narrowly lost. Columns 2–3 include division fixed effects, and Column 3 adds pre-determined controls: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

Table 7: Robustness of the historical elites effect using a rectangular kernel

	Depvar: settlement level night lights growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Historical Elite	-0.336***	-0.228**	-0.245*
	(0.116)	(0.0990)	(0.123)
N	11,281	11,281	11,281
R^2	0.017	0.035	0.044
RD bandwidth	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal
Specification	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear

Notes: The table presents regression discontinuity estimates from a robustness exercise using a rectangular kernel to examine the effect of electing a historical elite politician on growth in nighttime luminosity during their electoral term (e.g., 2008–2013 for a candidate elected in 2008). The sample compares settlements in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those where they narrowly lost. All columns use rectangular kernel-weighted local linear regression with optimal bandwidths calculated using Cattaneo et al. (2017). Columns 2–3 include division fixed effects, and Column 3 adds pre-determined controls: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

Table 8: Robustness of the historical elites effect using a CER-optimal bandwidth

	Depvar: settlement level night lights growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Historical Elite	-0.336***	-0.234**	-0.250**
	(0.119)	(0.106)	(0.121)
N	12,292	12,292	12,292
R^2	0.024	0.041	0.052
RD bandwidth	CER-Optimal	CER-Optimal	CER-Optimal
Specification	Local linear	Local linear	Local linear

Notes: The table presents regression discontinuity estimates from a robustness exercise using a CER-optimal data driven bandwidth to examine the effect of electing a historical elite politician on growth in nighttime luminosity during their electoral term (e.g., 2008–2013 for a candidate elected in 2008). The sample compares settlements in constituencies where a historical elite narrowly won to those where they narrowly lost. All columns use rectangular kernel-weighted local linear regression with optimal bandwidths calculated using Cattaneo et al. (2017). Columns 2–3 include division fixed effects, and Column 3 adds pre-determined controls: prior electoral cycle night lights growth, ruggedness, long-run rainfall and temperature, soil suitability, wheat and rice suitability, distance to river, and built-up area density. Standard errors, clustered at the constituency level, are in parentheses. ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

Table 9: Effect of historical elites on voting decision and dispute resolution

	Pr(voting based on tribal elders influence)		Pr(voting based on development works)		Pr(community disputes taken to panchayat)		Pr(individual disputes taken to police)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Historical Dummy	0.133***	0.090***	-0.190***	-0.175***	0.156***	0.089***	-0.085***	-0.098***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)
N	2530	2526	2530	2526	2530	2522	2530	2526
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pseudo R^2	0.014	0.059	0.026	0.047	0.020	0.056	0.005	0.043

Notes: The table reports average marginal effects (AMEs) from logistic regression models estimating the effect of historical elite status on voting decisions and dispute resolution. The unit of observation is a respondent in the 2016 Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) household survey. Historical elite status (Historical Dummy) is defined as a binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent resides in a constituency that elected a historical elite in atleast two out of the three contemporary elections (2002, 2008, and 2013). For each outcome, two models are presented: (1) without controls and (2) with controls, including gender, education, source of income, household income, area, and the natural logarithm of age. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1.

Table 10: Effect of historical elites on trust in state institutions

	Pr(Low Trust in Parliament)		Pr(Low Trust in District Court)		Pr(Low Trust in High Court)		Pr(Low Trust in Supreme Court)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Historical Dummy	0.069***	0.056***	0.104***	0.098***	0.144***	0.128***	0.165***	0.164***
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)
N	2530	2528	2530	2526	2530	2530	2530	2530
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pseudo R^2	0.004	0.022	0.009	0.033	0.015	0.040	0.020	0.046

Notes: The table reports average marginal effects (AMEs) from logistic regression models estimating the effect of historical elite status on trust in parliament, trust in district court, and trust in high court. The unit of observation is a respondent in the 2016 Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) household survey. Historical elite status (Historical Dummy) is defined as a binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent resides in a constituency that elected a historical elite in atleast two out of the three contemporary elections (2002, 2008, and 2013). For each outcome, two models are presented: (1) without controls and (2) with controls, including gender, education, source of income, household income, area, and the natural logarithm of age. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.