Anti-Incumbency, Parties, and Legislatures: Theory and Evidence from India

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Abstract

Incumbent legislators in some developing countries are often thought to face an electoral disadvantage relative to challengers. This paper traces this effect to high levels of centralization within the political parties and governments of these countries. In political systems dominated by party leaders, legislators face formal and informal constraints on their ability to influence policy, stake positions, and control patronage, which in turn reduce their ability to build up personal votes. This theory is tested on a dataset of Indian national elections since 1977, using a regression discontinuity design to measure the effects of incumbency. Candidates less affected by centralization—in particular, those not affected by restrictions on free parliamentary voting—have a low or non-existent incumbency disadvantage. Corruption appears have little effect on incumbency disadvantage, while poverty has a weak effect. The results imply that the electoral effects of political office are conditional on the overall structure of the political system.

Key words: Incumbency; Regression Discontinuity; India

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1 Introduction

In the legislatures of developed countries, holding office is associated with an increasing chance of subsequent reelection, an advantage usually to increased visibility and the ability to provide popular constituency services, win policies desired by constituents, and stake out visible policy positions (Gelman and King, 1990; Lee, 2001; Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart, 2000). While most of these findings focus on the United States, this advantage is also present, if somewhat weaker, in parliamentary systems with single member districts, such as the United Kingdom (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987). However, studies of developing democracies, however, have found evidence that incumbency may hurt reelection chances of legislators and local officials (Klašnja and Titiunik, 2014; Klašnja, 2016; Eggers and Spirling, 2015; Linden, 2004; Uppal, 2009; Ravishankar, 2009), or have no effect (De Magalhaes, 2015). However, with several notable exceptions, this literature has tended to focus its attention on the challenging task of identifying and estimating incumbency disadvantage, rather than on developing theories of its causes.

This paper develops a theoretical framework for understanding incumbency disadvantage that takes as its starting point the older American politics literature on incumbency. According these authors, incumbency advantage comes from the ability of legislators to influence both public policy and patronage distribution in ways that are favorable to their constituents, creating a perceived valence advantage over challengers. In addition, incumbents are able to take positions on issues more visibly than challengers, enabling them to appear ideologically closer to their constituents than an unknown challenger.

This dynamic is possible because many legislatures and parties, such as those of the mid-century United States, evolved in ways that maximize the visibility and influence of individual members. By contrast, many developing countries, influenced by colonial and post-colonial authoritarianism, have developed highly centralized legislatures and political parties. Common manifestations of this centralization include legal or practical restrictions on voting against party orders, a lack of member input in party policymaking, centralized nomination decisions, and small or non-existent committee systems and legislative staff support. Under such restrictions, members have little influence, visibility

or autonomy, making it difficult to build up a personal vote. Incumbency advantage, in this account, is the product of specific aspects of institutional design, and will not be present when these features are absent.

Legislators in high centralized systems thus are expected to represent their constituents' interests, but have little chance of influencing policy-making directly and are in an weak bargaining position relative to party leaders. In such circumstances, even relatively effective constituent politicians will face difficulties in representing their constituents' wishes, and many legislators will conclude that sycophantic service of the party leadership is a more effective long-term electoral strategy than trying to build a local support base. Voters tend to reject such ineffective incumbents, hoping instead that the new member will be one of the few well-connected and effective legislators. Put another way, the structure of a centralized political system makes most incumbents perform poorly, while creating considerable pressure on voters to select a high-performing incumbent.

India exhibits several examples of institutional features that privilege party leaders over legislators. Indian legislators have, since 1985, been legally banned from voting against the wishes of their party's leadership, giving them little leverage to bargain with party leaders for concessions and little scope to take independent stances on issues. Legislators who seek to influence policy internally come up against the fact that the parties themselves are almost uniformly undemocratic, controlled by charismatic leaders or "high commands" that not only shapes all policy decisions but have absolute control over the nomination and renomination of candidates. While American legislators can attempt to carve out policy influence and visibility by serving on committees and making speeches, Indian state and national legislatures have weak or non-existent committee systems, little staff, and have only brief and perfunctory sessions (Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2016). Given these limitations, Indian voters have little reason to expect that their legislators will represent their preferences in policy terms, or even bring pork to the district. This is particularly problematic because Indians depend on their government for a wide variety of essential services.

The major testable implications of this argument are that while incumbency should have a generally negative effect on future election outcomes in India, this effect should

be weaker for incumbents in parties less affected by centralization. These hypotheses are tested on the Indian national legislature, using data on every election between 1977 and 2014. To deal with the problem that incumbents may differ from non-incumbents along both unobserved and unobserved characteristics, the analysis uses a regression discontinuity design that compares candidates who barely won or barely lost the previous election. To address issues of selective rerunning, all the main results are also replicated using an alternative "unconditional" definition of incumbency advantage.

The primary empirical results feature comparisons of the regression discontinuity coefficients between subsamples of candidates more effected by these centralizing and disempowering tendencies and the remaining pool of candidates. The first of these focuses on the implementation of rules against defection in legislative voting, taking advantage of a (now repealed) loophole that allowed members from small parties to vote agains the wishes of the leadership while members from other members were not. While this loophole was in place, small party members had higher electoral returns to winning than large ones, even though small party incumbents performed worse than large ones during periods when the two groups faced the same legal restrictions. Similarly, large party incumbents did not lose from incumbency before the introduction of this policy.

A second sets of tests compares the effects of incumbency between subgroups of political parties thought to be less highly centralized than others, or have a leadership slightly more responsive to member concerns. Candidates from these groups are more likely to benefit from winning a previous election than other candidates. Variation in the spread of these types of parties means that there are sharp, and hitherto unstudied, regional patterns in the effects of incumbency, with South Indian incumbents having a slight incumbency advantage, and Western Indian incumbents having the largest estimated incumbency disadvantages.

A final implication of the theory is that members with high levels of political skills should be able to exploit incumbency more effectively than other members, and thus reduce or eliminate the negative effects of these institutional restrictions. Some limited support for this contention is provided by the fact that older candidates, who are both more experienced and have faced a variety of selection pressures, face a much lower incumbency disadvantage than younger members.

While a theory of legislative weakness find strong support in the Indian data, other theories, such as those emphasizing the roles of poverty and corruption, have little empirical backing. Not only is candidate criminality unassociated with incumbency effects, but candidates facing criminal charges appear to benefit from incumbency slightly more than candidates with non criminal records. District-level social characteristics have perceptible, but generally statistically insignificant, effects. For reasons of space, these additional results are discussed in a supplemental appendix.

These findings support the idea that the benefits of incumbency are institutionally specific: They demand a legislature that, like the "textbook congress" of the mid-20th century United States, allows considerable power and autonomy to its individual members. The non-existent incumbency advantage in poor democracies is thus not a product of their poverty, or even of the poor quality of their incumbents, but rather of the over-centralization of their political systems. These conclusions contribute to the literature on the role of legislatures in the developing world, and their differences from the American and European cases that have motivated most theory-building on legislatures.

Section Two describes the existing literature on incumbency advantage and disadvantage, while Section Three uses this literature to develop a theory of incumbency and anti-incumbency. Section Four will show how the theory applies in India, detailing the major limitations on independent action that legislators face. Section Five examines the regression discontinuity design, and the variables used to proxy for legislator powerlessness and local government effectiveness. Section Six reports the results of the analysis, and Section Seven concludes with a discussion of the role of anti-incumbency in India and in the developing world as a whole. Section A.1 discusses two major alternative explanations for incumbency advantage, poverty and corruption, and the robustness of the results to the inclusion of a variety of control variables.

2 Incumbency and Anti-Incumbency

2.1 The Developed World

Studies of the United States Congress have long found that legislators who win an election are likely to win the next one (Gelman and King, 1990; Lee, 2001; Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart, 2000), though this effect has declined somewhat in recent years (Jacobson, 2015). This effect operates both through straightforward voter preferences and through strategic entry by candidates (Cox and Katz, 1996). A wide variety of explanations have been proposed for this phenomenon. Congressmen may have superior access to resources that enhance electoral success, such as staff, campaign funds and the franking privilege (Mayhew, 1974), they may be able to perform popularity-enhancing constituent services (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987; Rivers and Fiorina, 1989), and are better able than challengers to gain media attention for their policy stances (Prior, 2006). These authors see voters as motivated to elect candidates who will advance their interests, and see incumbents as being better able than challengers to demonstrate (or publicize) their ability and willingness to do this. Voters will prefer the known quantity of the candidate to the less certain skills of the challenger. Closely related work has shown that incumbency advantage extends to non-legislative offices in the United States (Ansolabehere and Snyder Jr, 2002), and that incumbents in resource-rich developing countries benefit from the pork funds at their disposal (Mahdavi, 2015).

While theories of the incumbency advantage tend to emphasize the voter and the candidate, they make certain implicit assumptions about the structure of the legislative institutions in which incumbents operate. Primarily, they assume that legislators will have the power and autonomy to obtain services and pork for their constituents, take popular positions, and (possibly) influence policy in ways favored by their constituents. In the context of the mid-20th century US House these assumptions were quite realistic. Party discipline was weak, and members had a great deal of freedom to take positions that were at variance with the national parties position but popular in their constituencies, and at times even to impose their preferred policy against the wishes of the party leadership. Other pro-member features of the midcentury congress included a strong

committee system that gave many legislators substantial power over defined areas of policy and a relatively large staff allowance that was useful for both patronage and constituency service. This pattern was not an accident: As Mayhew (1974) argued, many of these features of Congress had been designed by the members themselves, to enhance their probability of reelection.

Is the US Congress an outlier? As a presidential system, the structure of Congress differs considerably from the legislatures in other rich democracies. The fact that legislatures in parliamentary systems tend to be less institutionalized and have higher levels of party discipline might discourage personal voting. This in fact what we see in the best studied case, the 20th century UK. Studies of the House of Commons have found a perceptible positive incumbency bias, (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987), though smaller than that found in the United States. Similarly, incumbency advantages have been found to be much smaller in electoral systems, such as closed lists, that discourage the development of a personal vote (Carey and Shugart, 1995). These findings, while they would imply that incumbency should be less advantageous in a parliamentary system like India than in the the United States, provide no explanation why it should ever have a negative or null effect.

2.2 The Developing World

In some developed nations, however, incumbency often has negative effects for both legislative and executive incumbents. While journalists had noted the phenomena for decades, Linden (2004) did the first systematic study, which found large negative effects of incumbency in the Lok Sabha. This study, like other work in this literature, has tended to focus on identifying the effect of incumbency rather than explaining it, though three patterns of explanation stand out:

Poverty and Public Goods: A series of studies of Indian election have attributed incumbency disadvantage to poor government performance. Uppal (2009) found an incumbency disadvantage in state elections, while Ravishankar (2009) showed the effect held for incumbent state governments.[1] In this formulation, voters systematically pun-

[1] Barooah (2006) found little incumbency disadvantage for parties.

ish incumbents for the low quality of state services that is endemic to the developing world. As Eggers and Spirling (2015) point out, this theory requires voters to behave somewhat irrationally, punishing incumbents without any reasonable expectation that their successors will perform better. Also, as we shall see, incumbency disadvantage in India does not appear to have a strong relationship to development.

Corruption: Another influential set of ideas links incumbency disadvantage to corruption. Klašnja (2016) found that Romanian mayors face an incumbency disadvantage, one that is higher among mayors with greater incentives to corruption. Aidt, Golden and Tiwari (2011) attributed the disadvantage to competition from criminal candidates among Indian legislators, though this finding stems from their use of a post-treatment variable (criminal candidate entry) closely associated with unobserved characteristics of incumbents. While corruption is a potentially persuasive explanation, it also presents some difficulties. While corruption and rent-seeking might well make an incumbent unpopular, the skills associated with being a corrupt politician might well be associated with enhanced effectiveness in the kind of patronage politics that make incumbency advantageous, or be seen as a sign of political authenticity (Vaishnav, 2011).

Case-Specific Explanations: Some accounts of incumbency have focused on explanations unique to specific cases. Linden (2004) traced incumbency disadvantage to the decline of the Congress Party's monopoly on power in India, noting that the disadvantage became more marked after the 1980s. Some Eggers and Spirling (2015) found that 19th century members of the British parliament suffered from incumbency disadvantage, which they attribute to non-incumbent parties being free to select high quality candidates. Klašnja and Titiunik (2014) found that Brazilian mayors faced an incumbency disadvantage, which they trace to a combination of term limits, rent-seeking, and weak parties. None of these explanations, however, are easy to generalize from: Many democracies with weak incumbents (including India) have no term limits, a candidate selection theory cannot explain individual (as opposed to party-level) incumbency disadvantage, and dominant party systems cannot explain incumbency advantage in the United States and Britain.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Legislators and their Parties

In Mayhew's formulation, the US Congress favors incumbents in part because it was designed by incumbents to increase their chances of reelection, and thus creates opportunities for incumbents to take positions, serve constituents and run effective election campaigns, even when these efforts hurt the interests of their parties. In contrast, most legislatures in the developing world, were not designed by incumbents, but rather by colonial officials anxious to limit the power of the first generation of elected representatives, and by post-independence rulers eager to maintain their party's grip on power and their own control over their parties. This has led to several noticeable differences between the institutional position of American incumbents and those in poor countries.

Resources: In the US Congress, members are provided with large staffs, seats in committees, and frequent access to the media. These institutional resources provide members with much greater opportunities than challengers to distribute patronage and make their achievements known to the public. In many centralizing legislatures, however, members have little or no staff, no committee structure, and serve in bodies that meet only infrequently. Wang (2013), for instance, finds that the United States is an outlier in the level of power granted to committees, in particular in the availability of staff. If we follow the logic of the US congress incumbency literature, these differences limit the ability of members to gain popularity by representing or serving their constituents.

Position Taking and Voting Restrictions: In the US and (to a lesser extent) UK, a member can safeguard her personal vote by proposing locally popular measures and opposing locally unpopular ones. Under certain limited circumstances, she may even be able to get her preferred measures enacted against the wishes of the leadership. However, in other countries this freedom does not exist. In the legislatures of many non-western countries, legislative initiative rests with party leaders, and formal informal rules limit the ability of members to vote independently of their parties. In a surprising number of emerging democracies, party switching is legally banned, a prohibition sometimes buttressed by prohibitions on cross voting.[2]

[2] Janda (2009) shows party switching to be legally restricted in Armenia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Gabon,

Centralized Parties: Even if legislators cannot influence policy or take independent positions influence, they may be able to influence the party's policy and positions. In the United States, legislators are nominated through contested primaries, and their status as party nominees is thus independent of their relationships with party leaders. Even in the UK, local party branches play a major role in the nomination process, and the "deselection" of a sitting member is a difficult and relatively rare procedure. In many systems, party leaders like the British Prime Minister and the US Speaker of the House are also selected by members. Members thus have some leverage in negotiations with these leaders (who they can remove but who cannot remove them), and may use this leverage to gain access to patronage resources or influence policy in ways that benefit their constituents.

By contrast, parties in poorer democracies are also often undemocratic and dominated by a small group of leaders, who have absolute control over nominations and the internal party machinery. The personalist parties found in many developing countries are only the most obvious manifestation of this phenomena, which also manifests itself in limited level of internal party democracy in these countries (Cross and Katz, 2013). Given the overwhelming influence of party leaders, ordinary members have limited bargaining leverage in dealing with them. Member are thus often unable to prevent the lion's share of patronage being in the hands of the leadership, or the enaction of policies that might be popular with the leaders but unpopular in a member's constituency.

All of these institutional variations from the classic incumbency model reduce the ability of members to provide patronage to members, or represent their concerns when they diverge from that of the party leadership. When legislators in centralized political systems are unable to provide their constituents with high levels of service and policy representation, the logic of incumbency advantage falters. As members are unable to demonstrate their effectiveness while in office, voters seeking higher levels of services might well decide that an unknown challenger might serve them equally well.[3]

Kenya, Macedonia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Belize, Bulgaria, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, Lesotho, Mexico, Namibia, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Suriname, Ukraine, Pakistan, India, Israel, Portugal and Trinidad and Tobago.

[3]Interestingly, as the US house has become more centralized, with control of committee chairmanships and party funds centralized in the leadership, incumbency advantage has declined(Jacobson,

3.2 Skilled and Connected Members

The relative weakness of centralized-system legislators within their parties and within the legislature as a whole in many countries provides an explanation for the lack of incumbency advantage in these countries. By itself, however, it cannot explain incumbency *disadvantage*. After all, if legislators were simply immaterial, voters would be better off ignoring them and voting solely for parties.

Consider, however, the possibility that *some* members are capable of operating effectively within the constraints of a centralized political system, and can deliver policy and/or patronage to their constituents. These members may simply be very highly skilled at manipulating the bureaucracy, have better interpersonal skills, or be more educated than their peers. Alternatively, these members may be more connected to the party leaders, and thus able to have influence over patronage or policy denied to ordinary members.

If such members exist, voters have strong incentives to elect one in their constituency. In such a situation, voters will tend to reject incumbents who have disappointed them and select from the pool of opponents, since there is at least some probability that one of these candidates is skilled or connected, and even low quality replacements could hardly perform much worse than the incumbent, give the severe constraints that all but the best members face. By contrast, in a decentralized system the very skilled members are not the only ones capable of operating effectively, and voters will thus retain incumbents with moderate levels of quality. Another way of expressing this intuition is that the relationship between member quality and member effectiveness is concave in decentralized political systems but convex in centralized systems.

To summarize, institutional circumstances influence the ability of members to supply effective representation, and thus popular perception of that representation. In decentralized legislatures, all but a few members are able to be effective as incumbents, and voters are correspondingly reluctant to see a member of median skill defeated and replaced by a randomly chosen challenger. In centralized legislatures, all but a few voters are ineffective, creating incentives for voters to reject a member of median skill in favor

2015)

of a challenger who may come from the high skilled group. One implication of this contention is that members with higher levels of skills and connections should not suffer from incumbency disadvantage to the same extent as less skilled members, since their ability to take positions and influence policy will be less affected by the centralization of power in the leadership.

3.3 Party Leaders' Incentives

By portraying a world populated by party leaders who exclude their own members from decision making to the extent that they face an electoral disadvantage, Section 3.1 would seem to have described self-defeating behavior by party leaders. Since party leaders seek to win legislative majorities, they would seem to have incentives to transfer resources to incumbents, or at least those in marginal districts, rather than starving them.

There are, however, two reasons to think that party leaders may behaving rationally in disempowering their incumbents. The first of these is that leaders may draw rents from absolute control of policymaking. While leaders certainly value governing, they may also value being absolutely unconstrained while in office, without fear of a party coup, a lost vote of confidence, or the need to propitiate backbenchers. In such circumstances, party leaders might be willing to accept a lower probability of winning elections if it is associated with greater power when they do win.

Secondly, leaders in centralized systems often possess the ability to replace incumbents with new candidates, and thus avoid or reduce the unpopularity resulting from the incumbent's ineffectiveness. As we shall see, Indian parties frequently replace incumbents, and the negative effect of party centralization on party votes is much weaker than its effect on individuals' votes.

3.4 Executive vs. Legislative Office

Section 3.1 described some constraints that are faced by legislators in highly centralized political systems, and the empirics below also focus on legislators. It should be noted, however, that the logic could potentially extend to any type of elected official with relatively poor facilities for independent policymaking or position taking. This is one

potential explanation for finding anti-incumbency effects among local executive officials like mayors (Klašnja, 2016; Klašnja and Titiunik, 2014). To the extent that local officials merely implement policy decisions made at higher levels of government or higher levels of their own party, they should suffer from the same type of electoral disadvantages legislators do. Given the fiscal and institutional weakness of local governments in many poor countries, and the relative strength of links between the local and national party systems outside the United States, it is not at all implausible that local officials in developing countries should have less practical autonomy than american congressmen or local officials. It is also, possible, however, that incumbency effects among executive and legislative officials may be casually distinct.

4 Legislators in India

India provides an excellent illustration of the types of centralizing policies that described in Section Three. Shaped by the authoritarian tendencies of both the colonial state and the Congress Party's period of single party dominance, India's legislative and bureaucratic institutions are highly centralized and tend to favor party leaders over ordinary legislators. This section will examine four major elements of this centralizing pattern, all of which differ considerably from the American and British experience. The effects of the first two of these, which vary among legislators, will be the focus of quantitative testing in Section Five. The second two elements, which vary at the national level, are presented to suggest explanations for differences between India and other countries.

4.1 Anti-Defection Rules

In the decades after independence, India's democratic institutions were dominated by the Congress party, which won nearly every state election between 1947 and 1967, and every national election between 1947 and 1977. In its period of dominance, the Congress had had little reason to worry about the loyalty of its legislators, since expulsion the party meant permanent exclusion from political office. By the 1970s, however, the weakening of the party's hold meant that legislative defection became more common. Defectors from

the Congress had played a key role in the election of the first non-Congress government in 1977, and splits had been the major cause of that government's fall. At the state level, legislators used the possibility of defection to extort huge bribes from rival parties (a process euphemistically referred to a "horse trading"), and the parties responded by keeping them under lock and key before major votes (Tully, 1991).

In 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi set out to address this problem for the parties. The 52nd amendment to the constitution banned legislators (both state and national) from voting or abstaining against their party leader's wishes under any circumstances, under penalty of being disqualified by the speaker and loosing their seats. The only exception was that if at least one third of a party's legislators agreed to act together, their defection would be considered a merger with another party, and not penalized.

As might be expected, the effect of this reform was that legislators since 1985 have had little leverage relative to party leaders. While members might previously have used their votes to bargain for private rents or policy concessions, they now have no credible threat of defection, and operate without even the remote possibility of defection found in other Westminster systems. While a few cases of individual defection still occur, as in the bribery surrounding the 2008 trust vote, they generally occur at the end of sessions, when the threat of expulsion is less intimidating.

The 52nd amendment left a substantial loophole. In parties with three or fewer members, a single individual constituted a third of the legislative party, and legislators these parties were thus free to vote as they pleased, under cover of "splits" or "mergers." Even this modest opening to member autonomy was considered unacceptable, and in 2003 the 91st amendment raised the threshold for splits and mergers to two-thirds of the legislative party. Even legislators who were the only members of their party were required to follow the instructions of leaders outside of parliament, while independents were threatened with expulsion if they joined a party.

4.2 Centralized Parties

The absolute control of Indian parties over their members' votes would be less important if members had some measure of control over party policy through internal mechanisms.

In the British system, for instance, individual members have a considerable role in removing and choosing the party leader. However, Indian political parties have generally undemocratic constitutions, with their leaders selected through indirect elections that are opaque and easily manipulated by the leadership. Many parties do not even bother with this charade: The Congress had not held internal elections since 1973.

This is not to say that the Congress's rivals are models of internal democracy. Many of these parties were founded by or are closely associated with a single charismatic leader—the BSP's Mayawati, the RJD's Laloo Prasad Yadav, the AIDMK's Jayalalitha—who has complete absolute control over the party organization, and who treats the party as an extension of their personality. Farooqui and Sridharan (2014), in their analysis of Indian political parties, find that Indian parties are all in the two highest of six categories of party centralization drawn from the comparative literature.

Developed country legislators are sometimes selected through competitive procedures, such as primary elections, that make their status in the independent of the leadership, and limit the leadership's ability to sanction disloyalty. In India, by contrast, all nomination decisions are made centrally, a process revealingly called the "distribution of tickets" (Farooqui and Sridharan, 2014). During the author's fieldwork, he attended one such session, during which prospective candidates, including incumbent members of the legislature, touched the feet of the party leader and pledged undying loyalty. Outside the gates of the leader's bungalow, unsuccessful aspirants for tickets, includes one sitting MLA, chanted slogans and attempted to bribe the guards to be let in. In such a situation, it is easy to see why individual members are in little position to demand pork or policy concessions from leaders.

4.3 Weakly Institutionalized Legislatures

In the "textbook congress," the internal operations and procedures of the legislature gave legislators considerable advantages over their opponents in reaching the people, and some possibility of influencing policy. The Indian Lok Sabha, however, is a very poorly institutionalized body relative to the legislatures of developed countries, and state legislatures are even less so. This is most obvious in the matter of staff. While

US Congressmen have at least a dozen staffers, Indian MPs, with over three times the number of constituents, have only a single personal assistant, or two sharing the salary of one. Any additional staff members must be paid out of the candidate's own pocket or by the parties, just as they would be by challengers.

In the US congress, a strong committee system allows even relatively junior members to gain policy expertise, and an increased chance of policy influence on certain narrow issues. Members can also use their position on committees to gain influence over bureaucratic agencies (which are particularly solicitous of members on the committees that control their budget), and develop relationships with interest groups in the committee's subject area (Fenno, 1973). However, this opportunity to build up a power base outside of the party system is not available in Indian legislatures. Many state legislatures have no committees at all, while the Lok Sabha had (in 2015) committee seats for only a third of its members. Those committees that do exist are backwaters, either handling administrative matters like member absences or simply rubber-stamping decisions made by ad-hoc "all party" meetings of leaders.

4.4 Bureaucratic Centralization

When legislators receive requests from their constituents, the legislator cannot usually supply the good himself, but must try to pressure the bureaucracy to do so. In the mid-century United States, the bureaucracy is generally portrayed as relatively anxious to serve individual members, both because of congress's ability to help or hinder particular agency, the formal and informal independence that many agencies enjoy relative to the executive, and their dependence on congress for appropriations. The mutually beneficial relationships between bureaucrats and agencies became one leg of the "iron triangles" thought to dominate many areas of american policymaking Arnold (1980).

The Indian bureaucracy, like that of many other poor nations, developed in a very different way. The same forces in 20th century Indian history that worked to create a highly centralized set of party organizations also worked to create a highly centralized set of executive institutions. The British, distrusting elected institutions that would be controlled by Indians, sought to concentrate power in the hands of bureaucrats and

central government institutions that they retained control over. Within the state bureaucracy, responsibility is generally quite centralized in the hands of the chief minister, and, within the federal bureaucracy, in the hands of the prime minister. These officials retain the crucial power to transfer civil servants from one job to another.

The party elites who control the bureaucracy have thus much more influence over policy than ordinary members, a fact that is reflected in voters' treatment of them. Many of the politician-constituent meetings that the author witnessed were highly confrontational and accusatory. The only incumbent candidate who was positively received was by far the most connected of the group, a state minister with "strong equation" with the party leader. This candidate was garlanded with flowers in each village he visited, and even requests of additional resources were coached gracefully. In conversations that would not have sounded out of place in the traditional American literature, voters expressed dislike for certain policies of the current state government but desired to keep the minister in office to deliver good roads.

In an attempt to rectify this situation, and give MPs some independent patronage, all Indian MPs have since 1993 received a fixed budget to distribute in local public works, the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). However, since these works must still be constructed by the district administration, they do not eliminate members' needs to interact with the bureaucracy to get things done. Moreover, it is unclear if the program actually adds to the total stock of patronage at a members disposal, or merely puts under a separate budget projects that might have been granted informally in the past. It is therefore not surprising that while some members use MPLADS more effectively than others Keefer and Khemani (2009), incumbency disadvantage has actually increased somewhat in the years since the program's introduction.

4.5 Discussion

The formal and informal constraints discussed in this section make it very difficult for members to be completely successful. While American congressmen view constituent service as an easy way to appear effective, the constituent links of Indian MPs often

convince voters of their ineffectiveness, given the number of demands made, the low level of resources available, and the poor success of all but the most highly connected legislators. The Indian political system is also structured to reduce the autonomy and power of ordinary legislators in policy making, Members cannot choose the leadership of parties, the structure of bills or even how they will vote on them. They are, in Chopra's (1996) phrase, "Marginal Players in Marginal Assemblies." This is means that ordinary members cannot advertise their policy positions, are in no position to shape policy directly and are not even in a strong position to demand side payments in return for acquiescence with policies shaped by others.

5 Data and Models

5.1 The Regression Discontinuity Design

A well-known problem in the study of incumbency is that incumbents differ systematically on both observed and unobserved characteristics from non-incumbents. To deal with this problem, the analysis uses use a regression discontinuity design, though it should be noted that the main results could also be produced using a simple OLS comparison of the incumbent and non-incumbent groups. In a regression discontinuity design, all observations have a score, and observations above a known cutoff are treated while those below the cutoff are not. In this case, the unit of analysis is the candidate, the treatment is incumbency, the score is the vote margin at the previous election, defined as the difference between the proportion of the vote gained by the candidate and the average of the vote proportion for the two highest candidates,[4] and cutoff is that average, normalized to zero. The dependent variable is whether the candidate won the election at time *t+1*.[5] The intuition behind the design is that in very close elections assignment to treatment or control is as-if-random, an interpretation that has been found reasonable across a wide variety of contexts (Eggers et al., 2015).

[4] A candidate winning one more vote than the average of the two highest candidates will always win the election, and one with one less will always lose.

[5] Similar results can be produced by using the candidate's *t+1* vote margin. However, winning, rather than increasing vote share, is assumed to be the main goal of candidates.

To estimate these treatment effects, I follow standard practice and estimate two weighted linear regressions above and below the cutoff.[6] In these models, the dependent variable is a individual's vote margin at the next election, with weights computed based on applying a kernal function to the distance of each observation from the cutoff. The standard errors are calculated using the procedure outlined in Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014), which corrects for asymptotic bias. For further details, see the documentation of the stata package rdrobust. In Tables A.3 and A.12, the main results are replicated using a simple logistic regression model, without weighting. These models also include year fixed effects and a variety of control variables.

Regression discontinuity estimation requires a bandwidth, which specifies how close observations must be to the cutoff to be included in the analysis. The main analysis uses the optimized bandwidths calculated following Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). Table A.10 reports very similar results from models that use a single, usually more conservative, bandwidth of .05, and the logit models also use this bandwidth.

Since incumbency disadvantage itself is a fairly well-studied phenomenon in India, most of the discussion will focus not on the effects of incumbency itself, but on the difference in the effects of incumbency across subsamples. When comparing subsamples, the coefficient of interest is the difference between the estimated effects of incumbency in the two samples. The standard error of this difference is calculated from 1000 bootstrapped replications.

To test the validity to the underlying assumptions of the RD model, I examined the distribution of data points immediately around the cutoff to test the hypothesis that parties and candidates are able to manipulate their electoral position relative to the cutoff. The density test described in Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma (2015) finds no support for this hypothesis: Indian elections outcomes fail to cluster on one side the cutoff (p=.986). See Linden (2004) and Uppal (2009) for further discussion of the validity of the regression discontinuity design for Indian legislative elections.

[6]Table A.11 shows the results for quadratic link functions.

5.2 Conditional vs. Unconditional Incumbency Advantage

The approach outlined above, like most previous empirical work on incumbency, compares rerunning challengers to rerunning incumbents, and thus bases its estimates on the subset of candidates who run in the same constituency in consecutive elections. These candidates are obviously not representative of the universe of candidates as a whole—in particular, incumbents are much more likely to run than non-incumbents. This concern is particularly troubling if parties strategically deny renomination to weak challengers, or if weak challengers are less likely to run than weak incumbents. De Magalhaes (2015) argues that much, and possibly all, of the incumbency disadvantage observed in poor countries is a product of strategic exit. De Magalhaes (2015) proposes that incumbency disadvantage should instead be estimated by examining "unconditional" incumbency disadvantage (the probability that a candidate who ran at time t will be elected at time $t+1$, whether or not they ran).

The unconditional advantage is an unbiased estimate of the effect of winning in the past on winning in the future. However, as a way of measuring (anti)incumbency bias within the electorate, the problem on which the existing literature has focused, it presents difficulties. While some part of differences in rerunning rates are the product of strategic calculations about electability, many are not. Party leaders could seek to reward incumbents for loyalty during the legislative session, or incumbents could develop a "taste" for office, or a set of social ties that encourage them to rerun office, more readily than a similarly situated challenger might. To the extent that non-electoral factors might cause incumbents to rerun at higher rates than other candidates, any unconditional model will severely underestimate incumbency disadvantage among voters. It is perfectly, plausible, for instance, that if the effect of incumbency on rerunning is sufficiently high there could be a positive unconditional effect of incumbency effect if voters are strongly prejudiced against incumbents. Since the theory in this paper focuses on voter behavior, I use the traditional conditional model for the main results. However, Table A.6 shows that the main results of the paper hold even when unconditional incumbency is used.

5.3 The Data

This analysis focuses on elections to the lower chamber of the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha. I use data on every national election between 1977 and 2014, which gives ten elections for which lagged data are available. Data from 1977-2009 are taken from Kollman et al. (2011), and for 2014 from the Election Commission of India. Lok Sabha districts were constant from 1977 to 2004, but were redrawn for the 2009 elections. For the purposes of assessing incumbency, 2009 districts were associated to 2004 districts if the new district had a majority of the population of the old district and had a majority of its population from the old district. Since some new districts could not be matched, the 2009 election year has slightly fewer observations than the others.

One major problem in measuring the extent of incumbency in India is the inconsistent policy of the Election Commission toward candidate names, which means that a single person may be known by several different spellings and abbreviations (Linden, 2004; Uppal, 2009). To deal with this problem. By elections and members who switched constituencies were ignored.

6 Analysis

6.1 Basic Effects

The first row of Table 1 shows the results of the basic conditional RD model of candidate vote share across the entire dataset. The findings reproduce the basic incumbency disadvantage finding of Linden and Uppal: Rerunning incumbent suffer are substantially less likely to win than otherwise similar rerunning challengers. It appears that this bias is attached to both individuals and parties. When we focus on party vote share, the party of the incumbent (whether or not they run) is still less likely to win than they would had they lost the previous election, though the effect is smaller than for individuals. Candidates from incumbent parties where the incumbent does not choose to run have a much smaller, though still perceptible, disadvantage.

Table 1 also shows that the results are not driven by candidate selection, as Eggers and Spirling (2015) suggest. Even in cases where the entire set of candidates (including

candidates outside the bandwidth) remains completely unchanged from the previous election, incumbency is a disadvantage.

The fifth line of Table 1 shows the results for unconditional incumbency bias–the probability than incumbents will at time *t+1* whether or not they run. As De Magalhaes (2015) found, there is no statistically significant incumbency effect in the unconditional framework, though the estimated effect is negative, and there is no evidence for an incumbency bonus.

Table 1: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Core Sample

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Rerunning Individuals	-0.156	0.040	0.000	0.062	2667	
Rerunning Parties	-0.128	0.092	0.000	.061	5068	
Substituted Candidates	-0.065	0.043	0.127	0.073	2556	
Non-Conditional Incumbency	-0.010	0.026	0.717	0.044	2456	
Same Group of Candidates	-0.157	0.124	0.203	0.044	251	
Incumbent Parties	-0.120	0.066	0.071	0.079	1089	.061
Non-Incumbent Parties	-0.181	0.049	0.000	0.058	1691	(.09)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time t except in the second line, where it is the party's vote margin at time t. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The other columns report standard errors, p values, number of cases. The subgroups in the fourth and fifth rows are defined by whether the candidate's party formed the government at the national level. "Non conditional incumbency" is the probability of candidates being an MP after the next election, whether or not they ran. The estimate in the last column is the difference between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Another interesting question is whether anti-incumbency bias operates at the national or constituency level (Chakrabarti, Gangopadhyay and Krishnan, 2005)—whether voters punish all MPs or only MPs who were part of the ruling party or coalition. The last two lines of Table 1 compare incumbency advantage among incumbent party and non-incumbent party candidates. The two groups are virtually identical in their incumbency disadvantage. This finding provides some limited evidence against the incumbency disadvantage being associated with voter disgust against political corruption or government mismanagement. The members with the best opportunities for rent-seeking, and who are closely associated with the government's actions, perform virtually identically to members who sat on the opposition benches. It also provides some circumstantial evidence that ordinary members are relatively benefit little from pork distribution and

policy influence, since members in the majority perform similarly to opposition members whose opportunities is this regard are much more limited.

Given the large literature on regional variation in India, it is remarkable that spatial variation in the effects of incumbency has never been examined. Table A.5 shows the estimated effects of incumbency by region. Analysis of the state level data show that there is an enormous variation in the effect of incumbency. Overall, incumbent disadvantage does not hold in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal—in these states, incumbents *gain* an from barely winning. The rest of India tends to discriminate against incumbents, but does so to varying degrees, with incumbents faring the worst in Maharashtra, Assam and Haryana.

6.2 Anti-Defection Rules

If incumbency disadvantage stems from powerless legislators, it follows that it should be smaller in circumstances when incumbents are powerful relative to party leaders, enabling them to stake independent positions and bargain more effectively for patronage. To examine this effect, I take advantage of the introduction of anti-defection laws in 1985 and 2003. Members affected by these laws should suffer from incumbency, while members who were not affected by these laws should benefit from incumbency.

Since the introduction of anti-defection laws occurs at a particular point in time, any differences in incumbency effects between time periods might plausibly be associated with other time-varying factors. To examine whether these effects are driving the results, I also examine another quirk of these rules. Recall that between 1985 and 2004, legislators could still legally leave their party and keep their seats provided that they defected with at least one third of their party caucus. While this precluded individual indiscipline in large parties, members of parties with three or fewer members (where every member was more than a third of the party) could still vote as they pleased, as could independents. To the extent that incumbents gain from being able to bargain over votes, we should expect incumbency disadvantage to be attenuated in small parties from 1985 to 2004, but that small party incumbents should have no significant edge in the periods immediately before and after, when they faced the same legislative rules as

large parties.

Table 2 examines the effect of variation in party size and structure on incumbency. The first two lines support the basic contentions of Section Three. While members from parties effected by anti-defection rules face a substantial (and statistically significant) negative effects relative to bare losers from these parties, members not effected by these rules slightly increase their chances of winning. This pattern is shown graphically in Figure A.1. While the raw chances of winning generally increase with lagged margin of victory for members with no voting constraints, they dip noticeably for bare winners who suffer from these constraints.

These patterns also show up when we compare members within a single time period. The second pair of lines in Table 2 report the effects of incumbency on parties with more or less than three MPs from 1985 to 2004, when small parties were not effected by the defection laws. While parties with more than three MPs had an estimated incumbency disadvantage in this period, MPs from small parties had a small incumbency *advantage*. The difference between the two coefficients is statistically significant at the 10% level.

Table 2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Anti-Defection Laws

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Diff.
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.073	0.077	0.343	0.121	727	.293***
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.220	0.046	0.000	0.056	2091	(.101)
Very Small Parties 1985-2004	0.056	0.146	0.700	0.077	185	.292*
Large Parties 1985-2004	-0.235	0.059	0.000	0.053	1268	(.156)
Very Small Parties Pre 85	-0.204	0.369	0.581	0.114	37	-.349
Large Parties Pre 85	0.144	0.097	0.136	0.114	437	(.397)
Very Small Parties Post 2004	-0.276	0.272	0.309	0.081	44	-.128
Large Parties Post 2004	-0.149	0.102	0.143	0.055	452	(.300)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005. The subgroup small parties is defined by whether a party had fewer than four seats at time *t*.

It is of course possible that small parties differ from large ones in some other significant way that enhances their incumbency advantage. However, an examination of the data from before 1985 and after 2004 (when there was no difference in party discipline between the two types of party) does not support this conclusion. Before 1986, there

is a substantial difference between small and large party incumbency effects, but in the opposite direction. Large party incumbents seem to benefit from barely winning in this period, while the small number of small party incumbents, looses votes on average. The large negative difference between small and large party incumbency also holds in the 2004-2014 period, when all members saw their voting autonomy restricted.[7]

These effects also do not seem to extend to small parties with enough members to be relatively immune from defection. Table A.7 compares parties with less than 30 seats (about 5.5% of the house) with legislators from larger parties. Using this more liberal definition of a small party, these groups have no advantage at all—in fact their incumbents perform worse than those from large parties. Similarly, the effects of incumbency do not seem to be driven by the increased value of individual votes in close parliaments. Table A.7 shows that members in the two parliaments where the fate of the government actually hung on close trust votes actually suffer more from winning than incumbents in other years.

6.3 Party Centralization

While Indian parties are all highly centralized by international standards, there is variation in the power of the leadership, with some parties having, for historical reasons, a stronger traditional of empowerment for lower level activists and officeholders. Table 3 shows the results for three sets of comparisons between candidates from parties or party units though to be more effected by centralization and those less affected.

The most basic of these distinctions is based on a subjective coding by Kitschelt (2012), who divides major Indian political parties into more and less centralized groupings as part of a broader typology of Indian political parties. Table 3 compares the two groups of parties, and shows that incumbents from highly centralized parties lose much more electorally from winning than members from other parties. This pattern is also reflected in Figure A.2, which shows the probability of winning by lagged vote

[7]The 1985-2004 period was notable for the relative weakness of the Congress Party, and the prevalence of weak governments. However, these differences do not appear to drive the results. The difference between large and small parties is very similar in periods of Congress rule and other periods, periods of non-full term governments and other periods.

margin: Among candidates from centralized parties, there is a very noticeable decline in the probability of winning for bare winners relative to bare losers.

Even within parties, not all party members are equally disenfranchised. Some regional units of national parties are more highly institutionalized than others, and enjoy a greater degree of autonomy and consideration from the party leadership at the center. During the 1977 Emergency, for instance, the well-entrenched chief ministers in Southern India were able to more or less ignore unpopular commands from the Congress leadership in the north (Lee, 2015). We might expect more powerful and connected state units to help members to establish a personal vote by intervening with the central leadership to gain policy and pork for their region. To measure the power and autonomy of local party units, I use their leadership turnover—the most successful and autonomous state leaders tend to remain in power indefinitely, while weaker party units are subject to factional fighting and leadership interventions leading to frequent turnover. Since all leadership changes in the major national parties are approved by the central leadership, this is also a good proxy for central intervention in local party affairs. In this coding, state parties are coded as strong if the average tenure for chief ministers of the party in the state is equal to or longer than five years (the legal length of a legislative term). The presence of a stable state leadership is indicative both of a stronger party organization, and the presence of individuals powerful enough to demand resources from the center.

Table 3 shows that local party strength, as indexed by leadership turnover, is negatively associated with incumbency disadvantage. Legislators from state-parties whose state leaders have an average tenure greater than or equal to a single term increase their chances of winning subsequently by barely winning, while legislators from parties with greater chief minister turnover suffer electorally from barely winning. This indicates that the incumbency disadvantage is entirely concentrated among the weaker or more divided units of the national parties.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), India's largest left wing party, is often though of as being different from other Indian political parties. Relative to other parties, the CPI(M) parties appears to have more functional systems for members to sanction the leadership (including, at times, contested internal elections). Relative to other parties, leadership turnover also appears to be higher, individual leaders appear to be

Table 3: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Party Types

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Less Centralized Parties	-0.107	0.046	0.021	0.075	2110	.376***
Centralized Parties	-0.483	0.110	0.000	0.052	328	(.132)
Strong Nat. Party Unit	0.111	0.123	0.368	0.069	422	.365**
Weak Nat. Party Unit	-0.255	0.068	0.000	0.068	987	(.152)
CPI(M)	0.235	0.168	0.160	0.076	181	.428**
Non-CPI(M)	-0.188	0.041	0.000	0.062	2521	(.197)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012). The subgroup of weak units of national parties are defined as candidates of national parties from states where the party won more than one election in the 1977-2014 period and the the number of years in office per individual party chief minister is less than five.

less important, and family ties less crucial to elite recruitment Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014); Chhibber (2013). Table 3 compares the effect of incumbency on CPI(M) and non-CPI(M) candidates. CPI(M) candidates have a statistically significant incumbency advantage, while candidates from other parties have an incumbency disadvantage of approximately equal magnitude.[8]

One obvious critique of this second set of findings is that the centralization of parties is closely associated with many other party-specific traits, such as their ideology, size and support base. Since most Indian political parties are stronger in some states than in others, the traits of parties are also closely bound up with unobserved aspects of the politics and culture of particular states. In such circumstances, interpreting the comparisons in the last column of Table 3 as causal is difficult, even though the same results appear using a variety of different subsetting rules.

Table A.9 provides some very limited additional support for the results by showing a number of paired comparisons of parties or state-parties *somewhat* similar on unobservables. The first two lines compare candidates the CPI(M) to the Communist Party of India, from which it split in 1964. This two parties are both similar ideologically and have broadly similar regional bases. However, the CPI has historically been much more centralized, a legacy of being formed by the incumbent (pro-Moscow) faction of

[8]Given the frequent accusations of electoral fraud against the CPI(M) in its West Bengal stronghold, one might be tempted to attribute these results to manipulation. However, CPI(M) incumbency advantage is larger outside West Bengal.

the old party, and the long-term influence of the KGB in party affairs. Table A.9 shows that these similar organizations have very different incumbency effects. While CPI(M) candidates benefit from incumbency, CPI candidates have a sizable incumbency disadvantage. Table A.9 also compares units of the Congress in neighboring states, and major parties in the same state. Despite sharing regional or political features, candidates from the more centralized parties have a much higher estimated loss from incumbency than the other group.

6.4 Skill and Connections

One of the implications of Section Three was that candidates who are skilled and or politically connected should benefit from incumbency more than other members, and that it is the desire to be represented by such effective members that drives the voters to reject ordinary ones. Finding a way of grouping Indian candidates based on their underlying skills is difficult, given that the qualities and personal connections necessary to be effective in the Indian political system are hard to measure, and little data has been collected on the individual characteristics of Indian legislative candidates, or even on members.

One (somewhat) measurable factor that is plausibly correlated with the political skills of candidates is their age. Candidates may gain more experience and connections as they get older. In addition, over time candidates may face electoral and non-electoral selection pressures as they age, with the most talented candidates remaining in politics and the less talented ones being defeated or retiring. We should thus expect older candidates to have substantially higher levels of unobserved talent than younger ones, a point substantiated by the fact that older candidates are overrepresented from close seats. The age data was taken from Jaffrelot (2003), though unfortunately the data covers only candidates in Northern India who won at some point before 2009. The members on whom we have data are thus concentrated in states where incumbency disadvantage is relatively high, and overrepresents bare winners relative to bare losers.

The results, shown in Table 4, are dramatic. Candidates above the median age (52

Table 4: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Politician Traits

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Age>52	-0.089	0.043	0.041	0.064	2272	.386***
Age<53	-0.475	0.084	0.000	0.073	538	(.098)
Age>64	0.000	0.041	0.01	0.088	2332	.474***
Age<65	-0.474	0.066	0.000	0.062	813	(.083)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel.

years)[9] have a statistically significant incumbency disadvantage, but younger members face a much stronger one, over fives times as large. The difference between the incumbency effects in the two samples is positive and statistically significant, providing some evidence that candidates with high levels of skill are better able to exploit incumbency for electoral advantage than other candidates. Similarly, candidates more that one standard deviation above the median age (65 and over) experience no incumbency disadvantage, while younger members experience a massive one.

6.5 Selective Rerunning

Perhaps the most important potential concern is that the results are driven by selective rerunning by strong candidates, particularly strong non-incumbents. This concern is given plausibility by the fact that rerunning rates differ substantially between incumbents and non-incumbents: In the overall sample, 1777 bare winners ran again, as against 890 bare losers.

To test whether selective rerunning is driving the results, Table A.6 examines the unconditional effects of incumbency—the probability that a member will win at time *t+1* whether or not they ran again. Recall that Table 1 found that there is no statistically significant unconditional incumbency effect overall. However, the differences between the subgroups identified in Section Four are substantial. Candidates affected by anti-defection laws are less likely to run and win again than other candidates, as are candidates and party units thought to be less centralized. These findings indicate that

[9]Note that a large majority of candidates in close elections are above the median age of the sample of candidates as a whole.

restrictions on the autonomy of legislators have a strong influence on whether incumbency helps members subsequently hold office, even when rerunning decisions are taken out of the equation.

An additional piece of evidence that selective rerunning is not leading us to overstate incumbency disadvantage is that the disadvantage does not appear to be lower during periods when many candidates reran. Table A.7 shows that in the three elections with the highest running rates (the years when the period between elections was shortest) incumbents do slightly worse than in other periods.

Table A.8 reruns the main results using party vote shares rather than individual ones. One advantage of this method is that the party effects are less likely to be biased by differences in rerunning. Unlike individuals, parties virtually always rerun in constituencies where they won or came close to winning in the the previous election. However, it is unclear if the theory, which focuses on the difficulties of members in building up a personal vote, extends to party-level outcomes, since party leaders might be able to reduce or eliminate incumbency disadvantage by replacing unpopular incumbents with new candidates, though party brands might be tainted by the previous incumbent's ineffectiveness, and voters might draw conclusions about the quality of the pool of candidates in each party from the incumbent's ability. Put another way, the effect of restrictions on member autonomy on party vote might be attenuated by the ability of parties to present replacement candidates from the challenger pool.

Table A.8 shows that the party-level results are similar to the individual ones, though incumbency bias is in general much smaller. The difference between the restricted and unrestricted subgroups is also smaller, and not statistically significant for defection rules, the measure that most closely captures the ability to rebel against the party leadership. This shows that while there are perceptible effects of centralization on party election outcomes, they are less severe than those on individuals.

7 Conclusion

Weak or negative incumbency effects remain a persistent, and indeed increasing, feature of the Indian political scene. However, not all incumbents are hurt by holding office.

Incumbents less affected by the overcentralization the Indian state and party system—those not affected by the voting restrictions of the 52nd amendment and those from less centralized parties—suffer less from incumbency than other members. Section A.1 shows that factors associated with voter grievance against politicians, such as criminal charges, poverty and state spending are not highly associated with incumbency effects.

These findings suggest that the bias towards incumbent legislators found in many developed countries is a product of a very specific set of institutional scope conditions. In the US Congress, incumbents were able to design for themselves an institution that provides incumbents with remarkable opportunities to build up a personal vote, including a large staff, lose party discipline, a committee system, and generous opportunities for position taking. They have also benefited from other features of the American political system, such as the decentralization of party organizations. When these conditions are not present, as in the hyper-centralized political economy of modern India, we have no reason to expect incumbency advantage to exist. Put simply, when holding office confers relatively little independent power, there is less reason why politicians should benefit from holding office.

Indian MPs, in this understanding, are caught between the demands of voters and the commands of a remote, unaccountable and often out-of-touch group of party leaders. However much they may wish to follow their American peers and develop their personal popularity, they are frustrated by a political system that gives them relatively little influence or bargaining power. In this sense, India incumbents are simply prominent casualties of the century of political centralization that began under the British and continued under the Nehrus.

The problems of over-centralized parties and institutionally weak legislatures extend outside India. As we have seen, many developing nations feature restrictions on legislative voting, limited staffing, weak committees, short sessions, centralized nominations and other institutional features that make ordinary members powerless both relative to their leaders and to their developed world counterparts. While anti-incumbency voting is a relatively benign symptom of these problems, the concentration of legislative power among people not directly accountable to voters is potentially worrisome for citizens

who would prefer a political class more responsive to their needs.

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Online Appendix

A.1 Alternative Hypotheses

A.1.1 Alternative Hypotheses: Corruption

One of the hypotheses about incumbency advantage most current in the literature concerns corruption. Incumbents, in this view, have greater opportunities to both to accumulate rents and to have this accumulation publicized than non-incumbents, and voters sanction them for this (Klašnja, 2016; Davidson and Kerosky, 2015). This is consistent with Bhavnani (2009)'s finding that Indian incumbents accumulate assets much more rapidly than non-incumbents.

However, it is possible that corrupt legislators will have resources and abilities unavailable to honest ones, such as control over violence, skill in manipulating informal patronage networks, and authenticity (Aidt, Golden and Tiwari, 2011; Vaishnav, 2011). If this is the case, then we should expect corrupt candidates to be more successful and incumbents than honest ones. If criminality is correlated with a candidate's level of political skills, we should thus expect the results to be similar to those in Table 4, with the more highly skilled set of candidates doing better than less skilled candidates.

Table A.1 uses as a measure of corruption the number of criminal charges pending against a candidate at the time t, as reported in affidavits they are required to file with the election commission. Since the affidavit requirement is recent, the data, coded by Aidt, Golden and Tiwari (2011), only covers the 2004 and 2009 elections. Criminal candidates have a slight estimated incumbency advantage, but that among non-criminals is more than twice as large. Very similar results emerge when we compare "corrupt" constituencies (where any candidate had a criminal charge against them at time t, to other constituencies. While the differences between the two groups are not statistically significant, they provide strong evidence against the idea that incumbency is disadvantaging

Table A.1: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Crime and Corruption

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Criminal Can.	0.052	0.161	0.747	0.047	121	.258
Non-Criminal Can	-0.207	0.108	0.056	0.067	409	(.236)
Criminal Const.	-0.043	0.110	0.693	0.074	306	.204
Non-Criminal Const.	-0.248	0.139	0.074	0.053	224	(.200)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time t . The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of criminal candidates is made up of candidates with no criminal charges against them at the time of the previous election at the 2009 and 2014 elections. The subgroup of criminal constituencies is made up of constituencies where a candidate had a criminal charge against them at the time of the previous election at the 2009 and 2014 elections. The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates , and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

India incumbents.[10]

A.1.2 Alternative Hypotheses: Poverty and Spending

Another popular hypotheses about incumbency advantage, briefly alluded to by Uppal (2009), and common in journalistic discussions of the issue, is that it is a reaction against poverty and/or low levels of government services. Developing country voters, in this view, see their poor material conditions, and the low quality of government services, and punish their representitives whether or not they are directly responsible. While this view implies some strong assumptions about the psychology of both politicians and voters, it is a hypothesis worthy of close examination.

Table A.2 shows a set of regression discontinuity estimates subsetted by a variety of variables that might be plausibly correlated with poverty, voter information, or the quality of public services: the literacy of the district, the proportion of workers classified as "marginal workers" (a poverty proxy) the proportion of the population urban, the state government's expenditure per capita, and the proportion of the state's expenditure spent on development, a category that includes education, healthcare and roads. The literacy, marginal worker, and urbanization data was collected at the district level as

[10] Aidt, Golden and Tiwari (2011) found that incumbents running against criminals have lower incumbency advantages, but it is difficult to know how to interpret this, since time *t+1* entry decisions are endogenous to unobserved candidate quality, and are not accounted for in the RD design.

Table A.2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Poverty and Gov. Spending

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
High Literacy	-0.064	0.059	0.283	0.077	1412	.163*
Low Literacy	-0.221	0.051	0.000	0.067	1359	(.089)
High Marginal Work.	-0.137	0.055	0.013	0.063	1423	.037
Low Marginal Work.	-0.184	0.056	0.001	0.069	1211	(.085)
High Urbanization	-0.094	0.065	0.150	0.074	1183	.085
Low Urbanization	-0.181	0.049	0.000	0.066	1531	(.087)
High Exp. PC	-0.082	0.066	0.216	0.074	1032	.106
Low Exp. PC	-0.199	0.068	0.004	0.056	862	(.103)
High Dev. Exp. Prop.	0.003	0.061	0.959	0.078	1139	.260**
Low Dev. Exp. Prop.	-0.269	0.072	0.000	0.056	866	(.111)
High SDP	-0.098	0.070	0.161	0.081	967	-.126
Low SDP	-0.224	0.067	0.001	0.052	931	(.098)
High Poverty Gap	-0.000	0.123	0.999	0.102	295	.073
Low Poverty Gap	0.073	0.078	0.348	0.108	787	(.166)
Reserved Constituency	-0.099	0.074	0.183	0.082	762	.093
Unreserved Constituency	-0.193	0.049	0.000	0.053	1858	(.092)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time t. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time $t+1$. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroups in the third and fourth rows are defined by whether the candidate's party formed the government at the national level. The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates , and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error. The high-literacy constituencies are those who parent district had over 54% literacy at the 2001 census. The high-marginal constituencies are those who parent district had over 77% of its worker classified as marginal workers at the 2001 census. The high-urbanization constituencies are those who parent district had over 26% of its population in urban areas at the 2001 census. The high expenditure per capita constituencies state-years where the state government spent more than Rs. 706 in constant 1960 rupees per person in the previous year. The high-development expenditure proportion constituencies state-years where the state government spent more than 64% of its total expenditure on development in the previous year. The high poverty constituencies were those that had a rural poverty gap of

part of the 2001 census of India, and was then matched to individual constituencies. The expenditure data was collected at the state-year level by the Reserve Bank of India

While high-service and low-poverty areas are generally slightly kinder to incumbents than other areas, the results are quite weak none of these differences is statistically significant except literacy at the 10% level. This in general accords with the regional patterns in Table A.5, which found that while the areas with the lowest levels of incumbency disadvantage were relatively wealthy, some of the wealthiest states in India have high levels of incumbency disadvantage as well. The evidence for poverty causing incum-

bency disadvantage thus appears ambiguous. Table A.13 reports the results of a simple logistic regression model that includes interactions of these variable with incumbency and vote margin. While incumbency still has a direct negative effect on vote margin, the interaction between incumbency and the development measures is never significant, except for literacy. The estimated effects of party and defection rule variables also remain constant in these models, with the exception of the CPI(M) interaction, which drops below conventional levels of statistical significance.

A.1.3 Alternative Tests and Controls

Table A.3 uses a simple logistic model with controls for the vote margin, incumbency, and the interaction of these variables with the independent variable of interest, while focusing only on cases within five percentage points of winning or losing. In these models, the coefficient of interest of interest is the interaction of incumbency with the variable of interest. These models can be though of as stripped down replication of the main results, without the weighting or bandwidth optimization procedures used in the main models, or the bootstrapped standard errors needed to compare coefficients. These models produce very similar results to Tables 2 and 3, with party centralization and anti-defection laws being negatively associated with the electoral performance of near winners.

One problem with the comparisons of RD coefficients reported in the main tables is that the effects may be a products of unobserved variables correlated with both the subsetting variables and the ability of incumbents to benefit from office holding. Tables A.3 and A.3 examines the sensitivity of the inclusion of control variables that account for other factors that might plausibly influence the electoral success of members, including membership in the national incumbent party or coalition, the lagged party seat share, the lagged vote fragmentation in the constituency, the reservation status of the constituency and the number of terms the candidate had served, real per capita development expenditure, and the proportion of individuals at the 2001 census who were urban, literate, marginal workers or members of scheduled castes or tribes. The models include both these measures and their interactions with incumbency, along with year

Table A.3: Logistic Regression: Main Hypotheses

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized P.	(2) Weak P.	(3) Defection Rule	(4) CPIM
Loser Vote Margin	8.821	0.549	-14.44	15.52***
	(6.453)	(18.57)	(12.70)	(5.308)
Winner Vote Margin	7.077	0.952	14.45	13.43***
	(4.332)	(9.216)	(9.861)	(3.863)
Incumbent	-0.417	0.270	0.395	-0.611**
	(0.316)	(0.608)	(0.588)	(0.287)
Variable	0.418	0.745	0.802*	-0.335
	(0.403)	(0.479)	(0.427)	(0.676)
Variable*Incumbent	-1.261**	-1.849***	-1.063*	2.304***
	(0.512)	(0.572)	(0.560)	(0.810)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	37.19**	15.98	35.69**	-3.308
	(16.61)	(21.18)	(13.99)	(34.29)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	22.69*	13.60	-4.145	-34.72**
	(11.88)	(11.23)	(10.64)	(15.10)
Constant	-0.0915	-0.554	-0.789*	-0.131
	(0.256)	(0.511)	(0.451)	(0.229)
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Observations	1,896	1,117	2,265	2,287

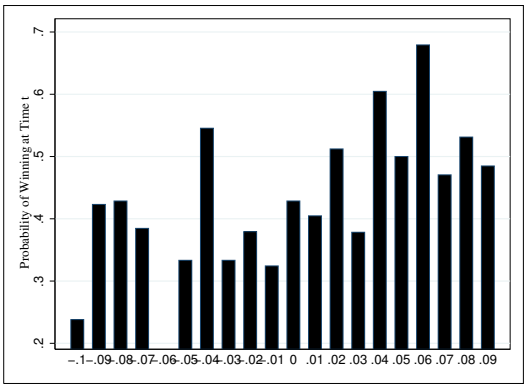
Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The table reports coefficients from a logistic regression with the margin of victory at time *t+1* as the dependent variable, and with the variable named in the column title as the key independent variable. Each model includes the margin of victory at time t on either side of cutoff and a dummy variable for whether a candidate won at time t, the interactions of those variables with the independent variable of interest, and the direct effect of the independent variable. Only observations within 5 percentage point of the cutoff are included.

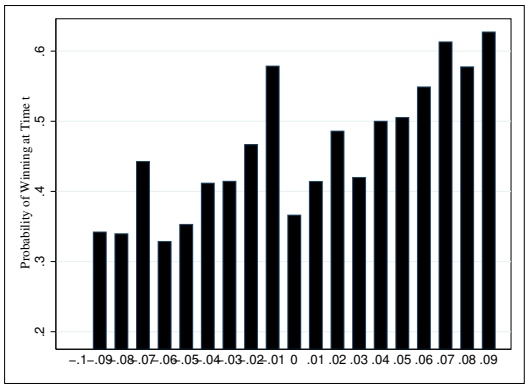
fixed effects. The inclusion of these control variables, makes the estimated effect of centralized parties statistically insignificant, but does not reduce the effect of the CPI(M), party unit weakness, and post-defection rule party size on incumbency, providing some limited indication that the results are not driven by any of the more obvious observable confounders.

Figure A.1: Election Rates by Previous Election Margin of Victory

(a) No Defection Rule



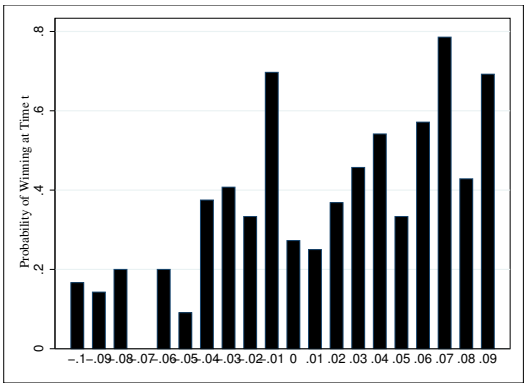
(b) Defection Rule



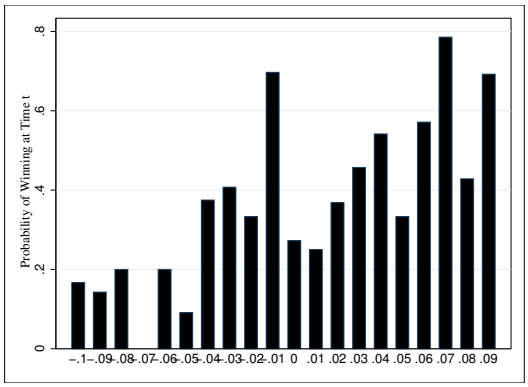
The bars show the actual probability of winning for candidates whose previous vote margin was in a specific bin. Bins are defined in increments of .01, and the bin labeled 0 thus represents margins of victory between 0 and .01 of the vote. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005.

Figure A.2: Election Rates by Party Centralization

(a) Less Centralized Party



(b) More Centralized Party



The bars show the actual probability of winning for candidates whose previous vote margin was in a specific bin. Bins are defined in increments of .01, and the bin labeled 0 thus represents margins of victory between 0 and .01 of the vote. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012).

Table A.4: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Lagged Vote Margin	0.013	0.114	5300
Winner	0.354	0.478	16924
Incumbent	0.221	0.415	15685
Lagged Party Seats	130.392	118.745	5363
National Incumbent	0.306	0.461	16924
Centralized Party	0.139	0.346	4512
Weak Unit of National Party	0.743	0.437	6145
Left Party	0.082	0.275	5712
Local Spending Prop.	0.043	0.039	11872
Local Spending Prop. 2001	0.294	0.192	16337
Small State	0.04	0.197	16861
Lagged Criminal Charge	0.253	0.435	878
Criminal Constituency	0.473	0.499	3221
Literacy Rate	0.541	0.103	15491
Marginal Worker Rate	0.773	0.071	15491
Urban Rate	0.264	0.145	15491
Prop Dev. Spending	0.642	0.072	11931
Real Total Spending PC	1127.711	663.408	11931
Rea Central Grants PC	159.201	116.345	12933

Table A.5: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Region

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N
South	0.090	0.081	0.267	0.071	659
West	-0.284	0.102	0.005	0.082	417
East	0.042	0.144	0.773	0.046	263
North	-0.297	0.060	0.000	0.065	1073
Northwest	-0.290	0.124	0.019	0.076	300
Northeast	-0.033	0.167	0.842	0.134	164

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroups in the third and fourth rows are defined by whether the candidate's party formed the government at the national level. The "South" includes Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, The "West" includes Gujarat, Goa and Maharashtra, the "East" includes Orissa and West Bengal, the "Northeast" includes Assam and neighboring small states, the "North" includes Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Utttarakhand, and the "Northwest" includes Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Table A.6: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Unconditional Incumbency

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.085	0.042	0.045	0.106	1715	.111*
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.027	0.030	0.356	0.043	3637	(.060)
Less Centralized Parties	0.025	0.031	0.426	0.048	3276	.121*
Centralized Parties	-0.096	0.054	0.077	0.070	981	(.071)
Strong Nat. Party Unit	0.152	0.064	0.018	0.045	658	.189*
Weak Nat. Party Unit	-0.033	0.038	0.381	0.062	1973	(.107)
CPI(M)	0.270	0.115	0.019	0.050	265	.297*
Non-CPI(M)	-0.026	0.026	0.314	0.046	4380	(.159)
Age>64	0.071	0.026	0.006	0.05	4025	.458***
Age<65	-0.387	0.061	0.000	0.054	1092	(.069)

The running variable is the individual vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether or not the individual was an MP at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012). The subgroup of criminal candidates is made up of candidates with no criminal charges against them at the time of the previous election at the 2009 and 2014 elections. The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Table A.7: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Additional Tests

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Close Parliament	-.254	.074	.001	.078	752	-.139
Non-Close Parliament	-.120	.0461	.009	.063	2081	(.093)
More than 31 Seats	-0.102	0.045	0.023	0.071	2060	.309***
4-30 Seats	-0.412	0.091	0.000	0.054	546	(.110)
High Central Transfers	-0.066	0.125	0.599	0.062	242	.106
Low Central Transfers	-0.166	0.051	0.001	0.054	1620	(.157)
Party Switcher	-0.188	0.045	0.000	0.057	2122	-.084
Non-Party Switcher	-0.093	0.072	0.199	0.101	624	(.098)
High Running Rate	-0.222	0.061	0.000	0.067	1151	-.114
Low Running Rate	-.108	0.051	0.036	0.063	1674	(.093)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of parties with more than 30 seats is based on the situation at election *t*. "Close parliaments" are 2004-2009 and 1998-1999. The high-central transfer constituencies are state-years where the state government received more than Rs. 500 in constant 1960 rupees from the central government in the previous year. The subgroup of party switchers comprises the candidates whose *t* party is different from their *t+1* party. The subgroup of High rerunning rate years comprises the candidates who ran in years where over 50% of candidates in close races from the previous election ran again (1991, 1998 and 1999). The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Table A.8: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Party Vote Margins

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	-0.049	0.067	0.468	0.109	973	.112
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.161	0.034	0.000	0.052	3869	(.077)
Less Centralized Parties	-0.086	0.032	0.007	0.072	4179	.175**
Centralized Parties	-0.262	0.075	0.000	0.056	795	(.081)
Strong Nat. Party Unit	0.077	0.069	0.263	0.067	829	.206**
Weak Nat. Party Unit	-0.130	0.044	0.003	0.081	2287	(.083)
CPI(M)	0.187	0.110	0.089	0.074	318	.338***
Non-CPI(M)	-0.152	0.030	0.000	0.063	4883	(.119)
Age>64	-.048	.028	.093	.074	2829	.420***
Age<65	-.468	.059	.000	.063	849	(.075)

The running variable is the party vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the a candidate from the party was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012). The subgroup of weak units of national parties are defined as candidates of national parties from states where the party won more than one election in the 1977-2014 period and the the number of years in office per individual party chief minister is less than five. The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Table A.9: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Selected Comparisons

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N
CPI	-0.254	0.332	0.444	0.051	47
CPI(M)	0.235	0.168	0.160	0.076	181
Samajwadi Party	-0.452	0.191	0.018	0.041	104
UP BJP	-0.252	0.185	0.172	0.036	111
Tamil Congress	0.078	0.251	0.757	0.079	34
Andhra Congress	-0.093	0.253	0.712	0.046	103

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with triangular kernel. The columns report standard errors, p values, bandwidths, and number of cases.

The Andhra Congress Party has historically been factionalized, and has had several leaders imposed by the Delhi high command. While the Tamil Congress is weaker electorally, it has historically been better at defying Delhi, most notably when G.P. Moopanar and his son led the entire state leadership into a breakaway party before successfully negotiating their return (1996-2002). Predictably, the estimated effect of incumbency among Tamil Congressmen is much higher than that in Andhra. In the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, the BJP is often mentioned as being a relatively well institutionalized for an Indian party, while the regional Samajwadi Party (Socialist Party) is completely controlled by the family of its charismatic leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav. Despite coming from the same state, the UP BJP suffers less from incumbency than the SP does.

Table A.10: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Fixed Bandwidths

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.143	0.110	0.195	0.050	335	.374***
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.027	0.030	0.356	0.043	3637	(.115)
Less Centralized Parties	-0.120	0.055	0.028	0.050	1578	.365***
Centralized Parties	-0.485	0.111	0.000	0.050	319	(.122)
Strong Nat. Party Unit	0.092	0.140	0.511	0.050	346	.333*
Weak Nat. Party Unit	-0.239	0.078	0.002	0.050	771	(.141)
CPI(M)	0.194	0.209	0.354	0.050	142	.387*
Non-CPI(M)	-0.189	0.045	0.000	0.050	2146	(.207)
Age>64	-.025	.052	.626	.05	1599	.441***
Age<65	-.467	.073	.000	.05	668	(.088)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally linear regression with a triangular kernel and a bandwidth of .05. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012). The subgroup of weak units of national parties are defined as candidates of national parties from states where the party won more than one election in the 1977-2014 period and the the number of years in office per individual party chief minister is less than five. The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Table A.11: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Locally Quadratic Regression

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.059	0.100	0.558	0.139	829	.293**
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.235	0.052	0.000	0.095	2866	(.122)
Less Centralized Parties	-0.111	0.054	0.041	0.119	2660	.423***
Centralized Parties	-0.534	0.132	0.000	0.075	294	(.151)
Strong Nat. Party Unit	0.079	0.153	0.605	0.094	487	.321
Weak Nat. Party Unit	-0.242	0.086	0.005	0.092	1164	.196
CPI(M)	0.205	0.186	0.268	0.135	229	.401*
Non-CPI(M)	-0.196	0.043	0.000	0.125	2814	(.225)
Age>64	-0.023	0.055	0.680	0.104	1568	.463***
Age<65	-0.486	0.072	0.000	0.118	1190	(.099)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time *t*. The outcome is whether the candidate was elected at time *t+1*. The estimate is the average treatment effect with locally quadratic regression with triangular kernel. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who either ran before 1986 or whose parties won three or fewer seats at the previous election between 1986 and 2005. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt (2012). The estimates in the last column are the differences between the two estimates, and the number in parentheses is the bootstrapped standard error.

Table A.12: Logistic Regression: Controls

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized P.	(2) Weak P.	(3) Defection Rule	(4) CPIM
Loser Vote Margin	8.417	-0.595	-14.49	15.27***
	(6.519)	(18.89)	(12.75)	(5.346)
Winner Vote Margin	6.313	3.289	10.02	11.04***
	(4.434)	(9.371)	(10.02)	(3.969)
Incumbent	-1.947***	-0.281	-0.985	-2.038***
	(0.596)	(1.006)	(0.696)	(0.483)
Variable	0.351	0.925*	0.859*	-0.362
	(0.434)	(0.509)	(0.451)	(0.688)
Variable*Incumbent	-0.864	-1.607***	-1.389**	2.124***
	(0.551)	(0.608)	(0.590)	(0.824)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	38.66**	17.22	35.62**	-4.573
	(16.73)	(21.48)	(14.03)	(34.33)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	19.42	8.640	-1.362	-29.98**
	(12.00)	(11.46)	(10.81)	(15.16)
National Incumbent	0.217	0.126	0.0945	0.0736
	(0.221)	(0.333)	(0.193)	(0.189)
Lagged Party Seats	-0.00140	-0.000908	-0.000499	-0.000217
	(0.00127)	(0.00208)	(0.00105)	(0.000943)
Candidate Terms	-0.00663	-0.0160	-0.00874	0.0300
	(0.0694)	(0.0979)	(0.0644)	(0.0566)
Lagged Herf.	0.493	2.471	-0.00112	0.135
	(1.062)	(1.581)	(0.946)	(0.944)
Reserved Seat	0.0517	0.166	-0.0268	0.000443
	(0.195)	(0.271)	(0.177)	(0.175)
National Incumbent*Incumbent	-0.410	0.0430	-0.52**	-0.488**
	(0.266)	(0.400)	(0.234)	(0.231)
Lagged Party Seats*Incumbent	0.00180	-0.00115	0.00183	0.00202*
	(0.00152)	(0.00244)	(0.00124)	(0.00116)
Candidate Terms *Incumbent	4.323***	1.754	5.081***	4.322***
	(1.325)	(1.899)	(1.185)	(1.187)
Lagged Herf.*Incumbent	-0.189	-0.145	-0.0140	-7.76e-08
	(0.241)	(0.329)	(0.220)	(0.219)
Reserved Seat*Incumbent	0.0254	0.0193	0.0595	0.0132
	(0.0807)	(0.110)	(0.0752)	(0.0688)
Constant	-0.157	-1.507*	-0.809	-0.206
	(0.479)	(0.839)	(0.540)	(0.377)
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Observations	1,895	1,116	2,264	2,286

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The table reports coefficients from a logistic regression with the margin of victory at time *t+1* as the dependent variable, and with the variable named in the column title as the key independent variable. Each model includes the margin of victory at time t on either side of cutoff and a dummy variable for whether a candidate won at time t, the interactions of those variables with the independent variable of interest, and the direct effect of the independent variable. Only observations within 5 percentage point of the cutoff are included. The "political controls" include membership in the national incumbent party or coalition, the lagged party seat share, the lagged vote fragmentation in the constituency, the reservation status of the constituency and the number of terms the candidate had served. The "demographic controls" include real per capita development expenditure (from the Reserve Bank of India, and the proportion of individuals at the 2001 census who were urban, literate, marginal workers or members of scheduled castes or tribes. The models include both these controls and their interactions with incumbency.

Table A.13: Logistic Regression: Alternative Hypotheses

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized P.	(2) Weak P.	(3) Defection Rule	(4) CPIM
Loser Vote Margin	11.66	1.431	-24.43*	16.19**
	(8.055)	(26.63)	(14.23)	(6.611)
Winner Vote Margin	9.825*	4.991	13.70	13.17***
	(5.343)	(11.81)	(11.55)	(4.817)
Incumbent	-1.385	-1.420	-1.769	-3.314***
	(1.364)	(2.397)	(1.358)	(1.197)
Variable	1.011*	0.603	1.198**	0.0188
	(0.597)	(0.647)	(0.523)	(0.708)
Variable*Incumbent	-2.110***	-1.597**	-1.714**	1.289
	(0.790)	(0.767)	(0.687)	(0.873)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	42.91*	23.80	52.05***	-13.32
	(22.27)	(29.41)	(16.13)	(35.45)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	22.57	11.63	-1.542	-8.961
	(18.87)	(14.05)	(12.61)	(18.02)
Urban	1.465	0.974	1.901*	1.868*
	(1.196)	(1.630)	(1.085)	(1.065)
Literacy	-3.224**	-4.643*	-3.912***	-3.710**
	(1.602)	(2.386)	(1.479)	(1.455)
Development Exp.	0.000613	0.000301	6.30e-05	2.52e-05
	(0.000567)	(0.000801)	(0.000506)	(0.000498)
SDPPC	1.53e-05	1.29e-05	9.86e-06	1.82e-05
	(2.75e-05)	(4.74e-05)	(2.65e-05)	(2.68e-05)
Incumbent*Development Exp.	-0.00112*	-0.000827	-0.000219	0.000108
	(0.000670)	(0.000921)	(0.000602)	(0.000600)
Incumbent*SDPPC	-1.27e-05	-2.78e-05	-1.03e-05	-1.84e-05
	(2.98e-05)	(5.08e-05)	(2.88e-05)	(2.90e-05)
Incumbent*Urban	-1.958	-0.722	-2.311*	-2.047
	(1.398)	(1.907)	(1.269)	(1.257)
Incumbent*Literacy	6.927***	7.032***	7.242***	6.070***
	(1.864)	(2.709)	(1.697)	(1.689)
Constant	-0.759	1.295	-0.467	0.465
	(1.048)	(2.053)	(1.016)	(0.868)
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Observations	1,205	773	1,487	1,497

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The table reports coefficients from a logistic regression with the margin of victory at time *t+1* as the dependent variable, and with the variable named in the column title as the key independent variable. Each model includes the margin of victory at time t on either side of cutoff and a dummy variable for whether a candidate won at time t, the interactions of those variables with the independent variable of interest, and the direct effect of the independent variable. Only observations within 5 percentage point of the cutoff are included.