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

Alexander Lee[*]

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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 substantial 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—those from less-centralized political parties, and from parties not affected by restrictions on free parliamentary voting—have a low or non-existent incumbency disadvantage. Corruption appears have little effect on incumbency advantage, 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

[*]Department of Political Science, University of Rochester

1 Introduction

In the legislatures of developed countries, holding office is associated with an increasing chance of subsequent reelection, an advantage usually attributed to 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 in parliamentary systems with electoral systems in which voters choose candidates directly, such as the United Kingdom (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987), Japan before 1993 (Hayama, 1992) and Ireland (Redmond and Regan, 2015).

Studies of developing democracies, however, have found evidence that incumbency may not help the reelection chances of legislators. Much of this literature has focused on India, with some studies finding an incumbency disadvantage (Linden, 2004; Uppal, 2009; Ravishankar, 2009) and others a null effect (De Magalhaes, 2015; Hall and Fowler, 2016). Other work has found similar patterns among local executives, and outside of India (Klašnja and Titiunik, 2017; Klašnja, 2015).

This paper develops and tests a theoretical framework for understanding incumbency effects that takes as its starting point the older American politics literature on incumbency. According to these authors, incumbency advantage comes from the ability of legislators to influence both public policy in ways that are favorable to their constituents, creating a perceived valence advantage over challengers. When voters do not care about policy, legislators can use the threat of defection to win pork or clientelistic benefits for their supporters. 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 maximized the visibility, autonomy and influence of individual members.

By contrast, many other countries, particularly in the developing world, have developed highly centralized legislatures and political parties. Common manifestations of this centralization include legal or practical restrictions on voting against party orders,

centralized nomination decisions, and small or non-existent committee systems and legislative staff support. Under such restrictions, members have little autonomy in their legislative role and little ability to win resources or concessions for their constituents, making it difficult to build up a personal vote. Non-positive incumbency effects, in this account, are not the product of differences in quality between incumbents and challengers (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita, 2008), but the product of specific aspects of institutional design that make it impossible for voters to determine their member's quality. Any positive effect of incumbency should thus only be apparent when these features are absent.

Their lack of institutional power does not mean that legislators in highly centralized systems are powerless. Close associates of leaders, individuals thought to control blocs of votes, or expert manipulators of clientelistic networks may all have considerable influence. However, this influence is independent of their status as incumbents: A crony of the party leader who does not hold office might be just as powerful as a legislator with similar connections, and more powerful than a legislator without them.

These ideas are tested on the Indian national legislature, using data on every election between 1977 and 2014. India exhibits several institutional features that privilege party leaders over legislators. Most notably, 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. Similarly, many (though not all) Indian parties are highly centralized, weakening the power of individual members relative to the leadership. Legislators who seek to influence policy or distribution internally come up against the fact that most parties are internally undemocratic, controlled by charismatic leaders or "high commands" that not only shape all policy decisions but have absolute control over the nomination and renomination of candidates. Several other features of Indian legislatures also weaken incumbents (such as the lack of a committee system and adequate staffing) but affect all members and cannot be the focus of a within-country comparison.

To deal with the problem that incumbents may differ from non-incumbents along both observed 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. Overall, the effect of incumbency in India appears either null or negative, depending on which of these models is preferred, replicating the conflicting results of the existing literature.

Where do these non-positive results came from? One testable implication of the theory is that there should be variation in incumbency effect across parties, and set of models compares the effects of incumbency between subgroups of more or less centralized political parties, finding that candidates from less centralized groups are more likely to benefit from winning a previous election than other candidates.

A second set of models takes advantages of the introduction of anti-defection rules, taking advantage of a (now repealed) loophole that allowed members from small parties to vote against the wishes of the leadership while members from other parties were forced to vote as they ordered. Even after accounting for year and party size, the effects of anti-defection rules are substantial. While the 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 the periods before and after, when the two groups faced the same legal restrictions. Similarly, before the introduction of this policy large party incumbents were not disadvantaged by incumbency, but their performance declined immediately afterwards. Like the party-level comparisons, these differences are present for both unconditional and conditional definitions of incumbency advantage.

While legislative institutions appear to be closely associated with incumbency effects, other theories, such as those emphasizing the roles of poverty and corruption, have less 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. To supplement the simple comparisons of coefficients of non-parametric models, the appendix also report the results of a series of logistic regression models that include control variables. The effect of anti-defection laws is not driven by specific years of data, the fragmentation

of the party system, the reservation status of the constituency, the size of the party, or national level incumbency.

These findings support the idea that the benefits of incumbency are institutionally specific: They demand a legislature that, like the mid-20th century United States Congress, 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 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 effects, 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.2 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 Its Effects

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). 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 more 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 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 incumbent to the less certain skills of the challenger.

While the US Congress is an unusual legislature in many respects, incumbency advantage extends to other contexts. Incumbency advantage has been found in other developed countries where voters choose individual candidates (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987), including those with single transferable vote (Redmond and Regan, 2015), in resource-rich developing countries (Mahdavi, 2015), and single non-transferable vote (Hayama, 1992). Conversely, the result does not extend to close list systems Carey and Shugart (1995).

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 party's position but popular in their constituencies, and at times even to impose their preferred policy against the wishes of the party leadership. Even when the leadership prevailed, it frequently had to distribute pork or other concessions to win marginal votes. Other pro-member features of the mid-century 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.

In parliamentary systems, voters anxious to influence the composition of the executive might ignore individual-level traits (such as incumbency) and vote solely based on party. However, the claim that incumbency effects only hold in presidential systems

ignores evidence that some voters care about the identity of their representatives even in parliamentary systems. Theoretically, some subset of voters might value the provision of goods to himself or his constituency, or the advocacy of a particular issue, so highly that he would be willing to put less weight on party control of the executive. Even in the UK, with its centralized state and tightly disciplined party system, some MPs are able to build up a personal vote through effective constituency service, enabling them to win even as similarly situated members of their parties lose (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987). While these effect sizes are smaller than those in the US, legislators in systems with strong traditions of clientelistic distribution and less salient ideological divisions between the parties, such as Ireland (Redmond and Regan, 2015), have found incumbency effects comparable to those in the United States.

2.2 The Developing World

In some developing nations, however, incumbency is often found to have negative or null effects for both legislative and executive incumbents (Linden, 2004; De Magalhaes, 2015), with the differences between the two types of findings resting largely on definitional and modeling assumptions (discussed below). Much of this literature has focused on estimating the effect of incumbency rather than developing theories of why it differs from the developed world findings. However, four families of explanations are common.

Poverty and Public Goods: A series of studies of Indian elections have attributed non-positive incumbency effects to poor government performance. Uppal (2009) found an individual incumbency disadvantage in state elections, while Ravishankar (2009) and (Nooruddin and Chhibber, 2008) showed the effect held for incumbent state *governments*, a very different question than that addressed in the literature on incumbency effects.[1] In this formulation, voters systematically punish incumbents for the low quality of state services that is endemic to the developing world, or their inability to spend money. 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 effects in India

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

do not appear to have a strong relationship to development.

Corruption: Another influential set of ideas links incumbency disadvantage to corruption. Klašnja (2015) found that, under a specific set of electoral rules, Romanian mayors face an incumbency disadvantage, one that is somewhat higher among mayors with greater incentives to corruption. Aidt, Golden and Tiwari (2011) attributed incumbency 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 distributional politics or be seen as a sign of political authenticity. In the appendix, we will see that criminal Indian incumbents are, if anything, more likely to be reelected than non-criminal incumbents.

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. 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 (2017) found that Brazilian mayors faced an incumbency disadvantage, which they trace to a combination of term limits, rent-seeking, and weak parties, results that also extend to other parts of Latin America. None of these explanations, however, are easy to generalize from: Many democracies with weak incumbents (including India) have no term limits, a theory that emphasizes candidate selection by parties theory cannot explain individual (as opposed to party-level) incumbency effects, and dominant party systems cannot explain incumbency advantage in the United States and Britain.

Selection: Eggers (2015) and Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2008) develop (though do not test) formal models that demonstrate that, under specific conditions, both positive and negative incumbency effects can be a product of selection effects, with

rerunning incumbents and non-incumbents having systematically different valence qualities. Section Four will discuss features of the research design (regression discontinuity and the use of both conditional and unconditional models) designed to address these concerns.[2]

3   Theoretical Framework

The last section described the conditions under which incumbency advantage emerged in the United States. However, many legislatures feature institutional constraints on members that reduce their ability to visibly signal their ability to constituents. This section will discuss theses constraints, why they exist despite the reelection incentives of parties, and how they might lead voters to treat incumbents and challengers in similar ways.

3.1   Institutional Constraints on Members

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, many legislatures in other countries were not designed by the legislators themselves, 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 many other poor countries.

Voting Restrictions: In the US, Ireland and (to a lesser extent) the UK, a member can safeguard her personal vote by proposing locally popular measures and opposing

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[2]As Eggers (2015) notes, the quality difference between incumbents and challengers in *close* races should be negligible. Eggers (2015) also discusses several mechanisms by which quality differences could emerge in close elections. Two of these, (asymmetries in the quality distribution and changes in the quality distribution) are noted as being impossible to test. The third (non-random retirement) is discussed bellow.

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 and informal rules that limit the ability of members to vote independently of their parties (Nikolenyi, 2016). In a surprising number of emerging democracies, party switching is legally banned, a prohibition sometimes buttressed by prohibitions on voting against party leaders' orders.[3]

Such restrictions are obviously a major obstacle to a incumbent trying to build up a personal vote through position-taking. However, they also hamper members trying to build up a personal vote through clientelism or pork. An incumbent can use his freedom to defect on measures important to the party as a bargaining chip to win roads and bridges for his district, jobs for his friends, and cash which can be redistributed through his network. Such bargaining is very common in the US system. In countries where defection or party-switching is impossible, this threat is non-credible, and a member's ability to leverage his vote to gain resources correspondingly low.

Centralized Parties: Even if legislators cannot influence policy or take independent positions, 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, members also select party leaders like the British Prime Minister and the US Speaker of the House. 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.[4] By con-

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

[4]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,

trast, parties in other democracies are often dominated by a small group of leaders, who have absolute control over nominations and the internal party machinery with little or no democratic accountability. The personalist parties found in many developing countries are only the most obvious manifestation of this phenomena, which also manifests itself in limited internal party democracy(Cross and Katz, 2013).

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. Many centralizing legislatures, however, have little or no staff, no committee structure, and 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.

In a system where major decisions are taken by party leaders, and office per se confers little independent power, influence depends on relationships with those leaders, rather than on formal positions. A member with a "poor equation" with the party leader (to use the Indian expression) may have little real influence and receive few resources for their constituency, while a party official or crony with a "strong equation" may be powerful even if they do not hold a seat. In such a situation, formal incumbency status becomes less relevant than personal connections in judging an individual's level of influence and power, since office holding does not confer control of any useful resources or confer any useful bargaining power relative to the leadership.

3.2   From Constrained Legislators to Weak Incumbents

Let us assume, following Eggers (2015) and Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2008), that voters wish to elect members of a high (valence) quality. Voters choose between candidates based on some information about quality, which they gain from a noisy (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita, 2008) signal during the election. When incumbents

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2015)

run more than once, voters have more information on their quality than their challengers, since voters observe a second, often highly visible, set of signals of their quality—their performance in office and positions while in office. As Section Two noted, when they are not constrained by legislative and party structure members are able to send voters many positive signals of their valence quality.

As Section 3.1 showed, there are several reasons why in many poor countries the informational value of the second signal should be low to nonexistent. If members only carry out the party's wishes, voters cannot use their actions as a clue to their underlying quality. Even if some members perform better than others, voters may not receive these signals, since their office is not publicly visible. To the extent that these institutional conditions weaken the visibility and constrain the performance variance among members, we should expect any positive incumbency effect to be severely attenuated or nonexistent (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita, 2008), while technologies that increase incumbent visibility should increase incumbency advantage (Prior, 2006).

Voters, then, wish to reward talented incumbents for performance in office, but are unable to do in legislatures where incumbent behavior is highly constrained because differences in member performance are both small and hard to observe. Voters are thus forced to judge incumbents using the same information (identity, appearance, rhetoric etc.) that they judge challengers, reducing or eliminating the advantages of incumbency addressed in the literature.

Note that this theory predicts a null incumbency effect for highly constrained legislators, rather than the negative incumbency effect discussed in some portions of the literature.[5] As we shall see, however, the empirical distinction between a negative and null incumbency effect may rest on modeling choices related to the rate of rerunning. See Section 5.2 and De Magalhaes (2015) for a further discussion of this issue.

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[5]If incumbents are not different than the marginal challenger in quality, these signal will on average not cause a rational voter to prefer the challenger. However, voters may prefer the incumbent simply because of familiarity, or because they are risk adverse and believe there some small proportion of candidates has very low quality, so that in most cases getting some verifiable information about the incumbent is reassuring.

3.3 Party Leaders' Incentives: The General Equilibrium Question

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. There are, however, three reasons to think that party leaders may be behaving rationally in decreasing the value of legislative office.

Firstly, leaders may draw rents from absolute control of policymaking. Consider a party leader choosing between two distributional strategies: One in which the leader grants every member some level of influence (roughly, the US model) and another one in which he makes all decisions himself. In the second arrangement, a leader is free to distribute patronage to himself, his family, and close allies, while selecting the policies that they favor. Understandably, a leader might prefer this arrangement to one in which influence and benefits must be shared more widely. This trend is accentuated by the fact that ordinary members may well be factional enemies of the leader, or from different parties.

Secondly, leaders may fear that giving too much power to ordinary legislators might limit their tenure in office. This problem is especially pronounced in parliamentary systems, where legislators who are free to change parties may trigger the fall of the government, or where democratic internal procedures may allow a successful leadership challenge. Such fears are far from idle, given examples such as the frequent fall of Indian state governments before 1985 due to defection[6] and the deposition of leaders such as Margaret Thatcher (UK 1990), or Tony Abbot (Australia 2015) in internal party coups.

Thirdly, decreasing the value of patronage distribution and policy concessions flowing to incumbents does not necessarily diminish the overall levels of distribution and concessions that they make: Starving incumbents of resources does not necessarily mean starving the voters. Party leaders, as described above, may structure distribution through

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[6]Examples include Orissa (1972), Nagaland (1975) and Haryana (1967)

the party organization or through trusted individuals who may or may not be legislators. Such a distributional pattern is consistent with a strong patronage network and high levels of policy responsiveness, and in fact may be more flexible than one that relies on ordinary members as a distributional conduit.

4   Legislators in India

India is a parliamentary democracy where legislators are elected from single member districts elected on a plurality basis. Indian legislators certainly do not lack ambition: Existing accounts emphasize that they maneuver furiously for personal advantage (Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2017; Nellis, 2012), and work hard to deliver services to their constituents (Bussell, 2017). Unlike the US and UK, India's legislative institutions tend to favor party leaders over ordinary legislators. This section will examine three major elements of this pattern, all of which differ considerably from the American and British experience.

4.1   Centralized Parties

Indian members have little control over the machinery of their parties, even within the legislature. This is not true in other countries In the British system, for instance, individual members have a considerable role in removing and choosing the party leader. 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 has 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 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 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, including one sitting state legislator, 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.

This statement about the power of party leaders over ordinary members should not be taken to mean that Indian party organizations are monolithic: While they are centralized, control over the center is often disputed. Many Indian political parties, and in particular certain units of the Indian National Congress, are noted for having high levels of internal factionalism (Nellis, 2012). However, this factional infighting is quite distinct from the type of mature intra-party democracy that might empower individual members. In particular, the resolution of factional disputes within Congress units depends not on votes within the legislative caucus (as they would be in US state legislatures) but on successful appeals to the national leadership by factional leaders. If the Congress demonstrates that fierce internal contestation is not necessarily associated with internal democracy, "cadre" parties such as the CPI(M) demonstrate that the opposite is also possible. While such parties are often mentioned as being centralized (in the sense that they are successful in keeping members from publicly dissenting from party policy), their more formalized party structure may allow ordinary members greater influence over the shaping of that policy than they would posses in organizations with a very powerful single leader.

The distinction between parties that give more power to individuals members and those that give less is widely acknowledged in the existing literature. In their coding of Indian political parties, Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) develop a closely related distinction between more and less "organized" parties. They define a less orga-

nized party "as one with an ad hoc, personalistic, leader-centric organizational structure. In such organizations, activists often find their career advancement prospects blocked by arbitrary decision-making, nepotistic practices or the whims of a few leaders at the top."

4.2 Anti-Defection Rules

The absolute control of Indian parties by the leadership would be less important if members were free to vote their conscience: In fact, even the threat of doing so would be a powerful check on the leadership. 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. By the 1960s, however, the weakening of the party's hold meant that legislative defection became more common (Kashyap, 1974). 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 (either from the party or on a particular vote) 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.

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 losing their seats. In effect, this banned not just party switching but any other form of voting indiscipline. 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 ordinary members might previously have used their votes to bargain for private rents or policy concessions, they now have no credible threat of defection, and must operate without even the remote possibility of rebellion 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. Members do retain (and frequently use) the right to switch parties between elections, a fact that has been linked to high levels of electoral instability (Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2017).

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.

4.3   Leadership-Centered Legislatures

One other set of differences between the US and UK and India, in the structure of legislative institutions, will not be tested in this paper, since it varies at the national level. However, these differences are consistent with the idea that incumbents are weaker in India that in the United States. In the US Congress the internal operations and procedures of the legislature gave legislators considerable advantages over their opponents in communicating with voters, and some possibility of influencing policy. The Indian Lok Sabha, however, is a very poorly resourced body relative to the legislatures of most developed countries. 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, generally 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 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 or rubber-stamping decisions made by ad-hoc "all party" meetings of leaders. At the state level, this has led ordinary Indian parliamentarians to be described as "marginal players in marginal assemblies" (Chopra, 1996).

One consequence of the weakness of Indian legislatures is that members focus intently on the constituent service aspect of their jobs to the exclusion of legislative activity (Chopra, 1996; Bussell, 2017). However, they face competition in this role: all parties and perspective candidates are engaged in the attempt to buy votes and to serve as intermediaries between the state and citizens, as are a large class of brokers (Chauchard, 2017; Dunning and Nilekani, 2013). It is unclear if, absent superior levels of resources, incumbents are better at performing these roles than similarly skilled challengers.

In an attempt to strengthen the position of incumbents, 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 require the cooperation of officials. Moreover, it is unclear if the program actually adds to the total stock of patronage at a member's 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), estimated incumbency effects have actually decreased somewhat in the years since the program's introduction.

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 a regression discontinuity design, though 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 are distributed on a known dimension (the running variable), and observations above a known cutoff on this dimension are treated while those below the cutoff are not. In this case, the unit of analysis is the candidate, the treatment is incumbency, the running variable 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,[7] and the cutoff is that average, normalized to zero.[8] The dependent variable is whether the candidate won the election at time $t+1$.[9] 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.

To estimate these treatment effects, the analysis follows standard practice and estimates two weighted linear regressions above and below the cutoff.[10] In these models, the dependent variable is an individual's vote margin at the next election, with weights computed based on applying a kernel 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.4 and A.15, 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.11 reports very similar results from models that use a single, more conservative, bandwidth of .05 (five percentage points), and the logit models also use this bandwidth.

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

[8]This candidate-level approach, which is modeled on De Magalhaes (2015), is designed to mitigate a problem with the traditional approach of defining a single party as the reference case. In many cases (as in India) no single party finishes in the top two in many constituencies.

[9]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.

[10]Table A.12 shows the results for quadratic link functions.

Table A.14 reports a series of balance tests on pretreatment variables for observations within this bandwidth.

Since incumbency 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 differences 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 200 bootstrapped replications.

To test the validity to the underlying assumptions of the RD model, it is standard to examine 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.

5.2 Conditional vs. Unconditional Incumbency Advantage

The approach outlined above, like most previous empirical work on incumbency in poor countries, 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 effects 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

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within the electorate, the problem on which the existing literature has focused, it presents difficulties (Hall and Fowler, 2016). While some part of the differences we observe 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 anti-incumbency bias 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 even if voters are strongly prejudiced against incumbents. Following the bulk of the South Asia literature, the paper uses the traditional conditional model for the main results. However, Table A.1 shows that the main results of the paper hold even when unconditional incumbency is used.[11]

5.3   The Data

This analysis focuses on elections to the lower chamber of the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha. The main results 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 constituencies were constant from 1977 to 2004, but were redrawn for the 2009 elections. For the purposes of assessing incumbency, 2009 constituencies were associated to 2004 constituencies if the new district had the exact same boundaries as the old constituency. Since 89% of new constituencies could not be matched, the 2009 election year has fewer observations than the others.

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[11]Hall and Fowler (2016) question the consistency of both unconditional and conditional versions of the incumbency advantage due to strategic entry and exit of candidates. They point out that estimates of incumbency advantage can vary considerably across specifications. However, their preferred method (party-level estimates using a predetermined reference party) is difficult to apply in contexts (such as India) with high-levels of party-switching, considerable variation in constituency-level dominant parties, and a theoretical focus in individual levels effects. The results below will show that while aggregate-level estimates in incumbency advantage do vary between the conditional and unconditional models, the between-subgroup differences do not.

One major problem in measuring the extent of incumbency in India is the inconsistent policy of the Election Commission towards 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 issue, names were laboriously standardized by hand across years. By-elections and members who switched constituencies were ignored, but party switchers remained in the dataset, grouped by their previous party.

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 incumbents 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 non-incumbent parties being free to select strong candidates in a period where the composition of the candidate pool is improving, 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 not an advantage.

The fourth line of Table 1 shows the results for unconditional incumbency bias– the probability than incumbents will win 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 there is no evidence for an incumbency bonus. This difference in estimates means that it is difficult to make confident statements on whether India voters in India systematically disfavor incumbents, or whether there is no such effect.

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Table 1: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Overall Patterns

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Rerunning Individuals	-0.159	0.042	0.000	0.058	2398	
Rerunning Parties	-0.128	0.092	0.000	.061	5068	
Same Group of Candidates	-0.160	0.124	0.195	0.045	249	
Non-Conditional Incumbency	-0.015	0.028	0.590	0.047	4221	
National Non-Incumbent Parties	-0.194	0.053	0.000	0.052	1465	
National Incumbent Parties	-0.125	0.064	0.053	0.093	1143	

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 and the 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—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 estimated 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 benefit relatively little from pork distribution and policy influence, since members in the majority perform similarly to opposition members whose opportunities in this regard are much more limited.

6.2   Types of Parties

By international standards, most Indian parties are highly centralized and poorly "organized" (Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2014). However, there is variation in the power of the leadership, with some parties having, for historical reasons, a stronger

tradition of empowering lower level activists and officeholders. Table 2 shows the results for two sets of comparisons between candidates from parties or party units thought to be more affected by centralization and those thought to be less affected. While these results test an observable implication of the theory, they do not have the attractive causal inference properties of the anti-defection rule analysis: While we observe small and large parties both before and after the imposition of anti-defection rules, we do not observe similarly exogenous changes in leadership domination.

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. The "more centralized" groups correspond to the type of highly personalized party discussed in Section Three, where all decisions are made by a single charismatic leader. Four of the eight are currently controlled by their founders, and the other four by close associates or relatives of a deceased founder.[12] An alternative set of tests uses Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan's (2014) coding of "organized" parties, coding as organized all party-years where the state party unit scored a 2 or 3 on their three point scale.[13] The major national parties, the BJP and Congress, are coded as less centralized on the first measure and have different values in different states on the second measure.[14]

Table 2 compares the two groups of parties, and shows that incumbents from highly centralized and less organized 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 margin: Among candidates from centralized parties, there is a very noticeable decline in the probability of winning for bare winners relative to bare losers. Table A.4 shows that this effect holds after accounting for year-level effects.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), India's largest left wing party, is often

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[12]The eight parties are the AIDMK, BSP, SP, BJD, JDU, Shiv Sena, RJD and AITC.

[13]Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) do not include data after 2004, and for years when a party was not one of the four largest in the state legislature. This missing data was filled in from the most recent coding of that state party unit, when available.

[14]Table A.10 reports separate results for these parties. Echoing these codings, both parties have less negative incumbency effects than others, particularly before the fragmentation of the party system of the early 1990s. However, these differences are poorly estimated and generally statistically insignificant, reflecting their internal heterogeneity.

Table 2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Party Types

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Less Centralized Parties	-0.109	0.047	0.021	0.074	1969	.408***
Centralized Parties	-0.518	0.115	0.000	0.047	275	(.134)
More Organized Parties	-0.086	0.078	0.272	0.058	806	.226*
Less Organized Parties	-0.312	0.077	0.000	0.042	802	(.123)
CPI(M)	-0.197	0.043	0.000	0.058	2266	-.520*
Non-CPI(M)	0.323	0.208	0.120	0.059	142	(.286)

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). More organized party units are those coded by Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) as having an organization level greater than one during this period.

thought 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 less important, and family ties less crucial to elite recruitment (Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2014; Chhibber, 2013). Table 2 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.[15]

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 2 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

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[15]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 than within it.

candidates from the CPI(M) to the Communist Party of India, from which it split in 1964. These two parties are both similar ideologically and have broadly similar regional bases. However, the CPI has historically been much more centralized and less institutionalized, a legacy of being formed by the incumbent (pro-Moscow) faction of the old party, and the long-term influence of the KGB in party affairs. Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) code the average CPI(M) unit as having an organization score of 2.94 out of 3 and the average CPI unit as having an organization score of 1.72. Table A.9 shows that these ideologically similar parties have very different incumbency effects. While CPI(M) candidates benefit from incumbency, CPI incumbents have a sizable estimated disadvantage.

6.3   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, we 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. In particular, the Indian party system became far more competitive in the years after 1985. To examine whether the results are and artifact of time, the analysis uses 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, independents and 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. 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 3 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 affected by anti-defection rules face a substantial (and statistically significant) negative effect relative to narrow losers from these parties, members not affected 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 close winners who suffer from these constraints.

Since anti-defection laws were introduced over time, these results might simply be the results of temporal changes, of which there were many in the Indian political system during this time period.[16] However, these patterns also show up when we compare members within a single time period. The second pair of lines in Table 3 report the effects of incumbency on independents of members of parties with more or less than three MPs from 1985 to 2004, when small parties were not affected by the defection laws. While parties with more than three MPs had an estimated incumbency disadvantage in this period, MPs from small parties and independents had a small incumbency *advantage*. The difference between the two coefficients is statistically significant at the 10% level.

It is of course possible that small parties differ from large ones in some other significant way that enhances their incumbency advantage.[17] 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 parties) 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, loses votes on average. The negative difference between small and large party incumbency also holds in the 2004-2014 period, when all members saw their voting autonomy restricted. Note also that large parties (and thus, the legislators overall) had no incumbency advantage before 1985.

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[16]Though Table A.4 shows that this is not the case.

[17]About 25% of "small party" candidates were independents. The remainder are a heterogeneous group, including members of every major Indian political party except the Congress and CPI(M).

Table 3: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Anti-Defection Laws

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Diff.
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.069	0.082	0.402	0.102	635	.303***
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.235	0.049	0.000	0.050	1810	(.111)
Parties 1-3 Seats 1985-2004	0.045	0.161	0.778	0.061	151	.299
Parties 4+ Seats 1985-2004	-0.254	0.060	0.000	0.052	1253	(.236)
Parties 1-3 Seats Pre-85	-0.326	0.448	0.467	0.074	26	
Parties 4+ Seats Pre-85	0.122	0.105	0.246	0.096	375	
Parties 1-3 Seats Post-2004	-0.193	0.279	0.490	0.089	36	
Parties 4+ Seats Post-2004	-0.163	0.121	0.176	0.054	315	
Parties 4-50 Seats 1985-2004	-0.280	0.097	0.004	0.053	498	.067
Parties 51+ Seats 1985-2004	-0.212	0.058	0.000	0.066	1250	(.121)
Non-INC 1-3 Seats 1985-2004	0.045	0.161	0.778	0.061	151	.327
Non-INC 4+ Seats 1985-2004	-0.282	0.068	0.000	0.057	986	(.229)

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. Independent candidates are counted as being their own party.

Might there be something about the 1985-2004 period that privileged small parties over large ones, for instance the relative weakness of the Congress Party during this period? The last four lines of Table 3 compare large parties such as the Congress (those with over 50 seats) to smaller parties that were nonetheless affected by the rule change, and then compares sets of small and large all non-Congress parties. The two groups have similar negative effects, indicating that the shift to an incumbency disadvantage among parties with more than four seats was not exclusive to the national parties.[18] The large party disadvantage is also present among non-Congress 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 suffered more from winning than incumbents in other years.

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[18]In the sample as a whole, the advantage of small parties does not 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 definition of a small party, these groups have no advantage at all—in fact their incumbents perform slightly worse than those from large parties.

7 Conclusion

The lack of an incumbency advantage, remains a persistent, and indeed increasing, feature of the Indian political scene, developing in the 1980s and becoming stronger since that time—though whether the result is null or negative appears to hinge (as the existing literature suggests) on the definition used. However, not all incumbents are affected in the same way by holding office. Incumbents possessing one of the core powers of legislatures, the right to cast their vote freely, suffer less from incumbency than other members. Section A.2 shows that factors associated with voter grievance against politicians, such as criminal charges, poverty and state spending, are only weakly associated with incumbency effects, and do not appear to be driving the main results. Similarly, Section A.2 shows that the results are not driven by political changes such as national incumbency, the fragmentation of the party system and caste reservation are driving the results.

These findings suggest that the bias towards incumbent legislators found in some 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, loose party discipline, a committee system, and generous opportunities for position taking. When these conditions are not present, as in modern India, we have no reason to expect incumbency advantage to exist. Put simply, when holding office confers relatively little institutional power, there is less reason why politicians should benefit from holding office.

Indian MPs, in this understanding, may well be influential, but this influence comes from their own political following and connections rather than from their status as legislators. Party leaders, correspondingly, may be highly responsive to voters, but this responsiveness is unlikely to be channeled through legislators. In this sense, Indian incumbents are casualties of the century of political centralization that began under the British and continued under the Nehrus, while American ones are beneficiaries of an equally long process of legislative institution building.

Personalized parties and institutionally weak legislatures extend outside India. As we

have seen, many nations feature restrictions on legislative voting, limited staffing, weak committees, short sessions, and other institutional features that make ordinary members powerless both relative to their leaders and to their counterparts in some developed countries. While a lack of pro-incumbent voting is a relatively benign symptom of these problems, the concentration of political power among people who are not necessarily directly accountable to voters is potentially worrisome for citizens who would prefer a more responsive political class .

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Online Appendix

A.1 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.1 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, though smaller in magnitude than than those in Table 1. 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 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.

While the results are in Table A.1 are in general very similar to those in the main Tables, the organized party measure is only significant at the 10% level, the proportion of CPI(M) members is not significant at all (though in the expected direction), while the sizes of the estimates drop at well. There are three explanations for this drop in the coefficient size and increase in standard errors. Firstly, the base rates of future election differs between the two models: Sixteen percent of candidates run and win in the future, but 45% of rerunning candidates win. While the estimated negative effect of incumbency under anti-defection rules is thus smaller in absolute terms in the unconditional model than in the conditional model, the effects are virtually identical relative to the base rate of winning for each model.

Table A.1: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Unconditional Incumbency

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.077	0.045	0.089	0.093	1480	.112**
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.036	0.031	0.244	0.048	3528	(.056)
Less Centralized Parties	0.029	0.031	0.345	0.056	3348	-.184**
Centralized Parties	-0.155	0.073	0.034	0.056	681	(.085)
More Organized Parties	0.063	0.045	0.165	0.063	1556	-.115*
Less Organized Parties	-0.053	0.036	0.144	0.053	2318	(.067)
CPI(M)	0.191	0.143	0.183	0.036	191	-.225
Non-CPI(M)	-0.035	0.027	0.203	0.049	4170	(.221)

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.

Secondly, an enormous number of factors could potentially influence the probability of rerunning: Death, age, party decisions, factional disputes, alternative political opportunities etc. For this reason we should expect estimates of the unconditional effect of incumbency (which simultaneously models its effect on rerunning and on voter choice) to be less efficiently estimated than models which ignore rerunning, though this may be counterbalanced by the larger sample size. For instance, imagine that the effect of incumbency were positive, but many incumbents chose not to rerun: the effect of incumbency would be more poorly estimated in a unconditional model than a conditional one, since the outcome of the first specification would be influenced by a variety of unmodeled factors.

Finally, in many circumstances these non-electoral factors will encourage incumbents to rerun at higher rates than non-incumbents: They may develop a "taste" for office or living in Delhi, or gain some advantage in party nomination procedures. This higher rate will by definition increase the probability that the incumbent wins the election at $t+1$, reducing any negative effect of incumbency. If some subgroups have higher rates of rerunning than others, the estimated negative effect of rerunning will be lower in these groups.

Table A.13, which models rerunning itself, demonstrates these points. The effect of incumbency on rerunning is poorly estimated and never statistically significant in any subgroup. While the differences between subgroups are of a reasonable substantive size (with less organized parties and parties effected by the defection law having *higher* rates of rerunning) they are no significant either. These facts explain why the inter group difference estimates are lower in Table A.1: High rerunning rates partially counterbalance poor reelection rates for these subgroups. However, the overall lack of a statistical difference in rerunning rates between the subgroups means that this reduction is not large

To summarize, as Section 5.2 showed, there are strong theoretical arguments for both the conditional and unconditional models: One is biased by nonstrategic exit, the other by strategic exit, and it is difficult to know in practice which bias is more severe. However, whichever model is chosen their are still strong, perceptible differences between the theoretically relevant types of incumbents.

One 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 (not surprisingly, 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.

A.2   Alternative Hypotheses

A.2.1   Corruption

One of the hypotheses about incumbency advantage most current in the literature concerns corruption. Incumbents, in this view, have greater opportunities to both accumulate rents and to have this accumulation publicized than non-incumbents, and voters sanction them for this (Klašnja, 2015). This is consistent with Bhavnani's (2009) 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 (Vaishnav 2018). If this is the case, then we should expect corrupt candidates to be more successful incumbents than honest ones. If criminality is correlated with a candidate's level of political skills, we should thus expect the more highly skilled set of candidates to do better than less skilled candidates.

Table A.2 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 much larger incumbency effects than non-criminals. 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

Table A.2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Crime and Corruption

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Non-Criminal Can.	-0.243	0.140	0.083	0.053	249	.341
Criminal Can	0.099	0.198	0.618	0.041	79	(.286)
Non-Criminal Const.	-0.279	0.180	0.122	0.048	142	.265
Criminal Const.	-0.014	0.156	0.929	0.050	180	(.286)

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.

idea that criminality is disadvantaging India incumbents.[19]

This finding raises the slight possibility that incumbency disadvantage is driven by the *positive* effects of criminality. Such a pattern would be consistent with the theoretical claim that highly skilled incumbents should not be affected by incumbency, but would raise questions about the generalizability of the findings. Testing this hypothesis is made difficult by the limited amount of data available on criminality: There is no variation in defection law incidence or CPI(M) membership among members with criminal charges. However, Table A.17 shows that the interaction of party centralization and incumbency is still statistically significant and negative after candidate criminality has be controlled for. In fact, candidate criminality has little effect on criminality once party centralization has been accounted for.

A.2.2 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,

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[19]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 of challengers are endogenous to unobserved candidate quality, and are not accounted for in the RD design.

and punish their representatives 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.3: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Poverty and Gov. Spending

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
High Literacy	-0.036	0.058	0.534	0.083	1428	.200**
Low Literacy	-0.237	0.053	0.000	0.065	1242	(.192)
High Marginal Work	-0.122	0.054	0.024	0.072	1471	.068
Low Marginal Work.	-0.190	0.060	0.002	0.065	1072	(.085)
High Urbanization	-0.068	0.064	0.290	0.080	1195	.120
Low Urbanization	-0.188	0.051	0.000	0.064	1396	(.093
High Exp. PC	-0.066	0.067	0.320	0.080	989	.133
Low Exp. PC	-0.199	0.068	0.003	0.057	875	(.100)
High Dev. Exp. Prop.	0.003	0.062	0.967	0.077	1107	.263**
Low Dev. Exp. Prop.	-0.261	0.073	0.000	0.055	813	(.121)
High SDP	-0.098	0.072	0.175	0.075	896	.127
Low SDP	-0.225	0.064	0.000	0.057	1008	(.105)
High Poverty Gap	-0.042	0.131	0.748	0.081	254	-.121
Low Poverty Gap	0.080	0.082	0.333	0.096	718	(.165)
Reserved Constituency	-0.093	0.071	0.190	0.095	790	.103
Unreserved Constituency	-0.196	0.051	0.000	0.052	1711	(.102)

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

Table A.3 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 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 negative incumbency effects were relatively wealthy, some of the wealthiest states in India have high levels of incumbency disadvantage as well. The evidence for poverty causing incumbency disadvantage thus appears ambiguous.

Could poverty be driving the main results? Table A.17 reports the results of a simple logistic regression model that includes interactions of these variables 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. This accords with the regional findings in Table A.5, which show that while several poor areas had high estimated levels of incumbency disadvantage, several wealthy states, such as Maharashtra, having high levels of disadvantage as well.

A.3   Additional Tests

A.3.1   Linear Models

Table A.4 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 is the interaction of incumbency with the variable of interest. These models can be thought of as stripped down replications 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 3 and 2, with party centralization and anti-defection laws being negatively associated with the electoral performance of near winners.

Table A.4: 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.

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.4 and A.17 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 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.

A.3.2 Region

Given the extensive 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 effects are positive and insignificant in the South and East of India, where some local parties have higher levels of internal democracy. The rest of India tends to discriminate against incumbents (at least in the conditional model), but does so to varying degrees, with incumbents faring the worst in Maharashtra, Assam and Haryana.

A.4 Additional Tables and Figures

Table A.5: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Region

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N
South	0.061	0.077	0.428	0.090	710
West	-0.320	0.062	0.000	0.063	984
East	-0.311	0.124	0.012	0.084	300
North	0.025	0.143	0.860	0.047	244
Northwest	-0.251	0.101	0.013	0.082	393
Northeast	-0.039	0.180	0.831	0.117	151

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.

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

(a) No Defection Rule
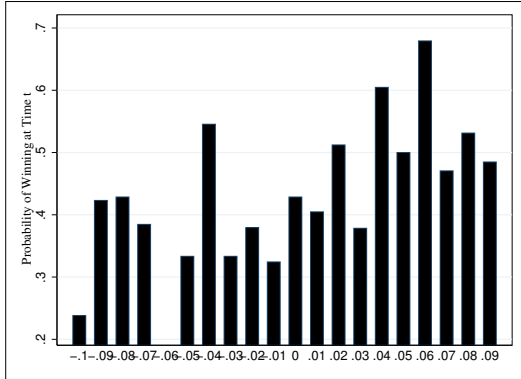
(b) Defection Rule
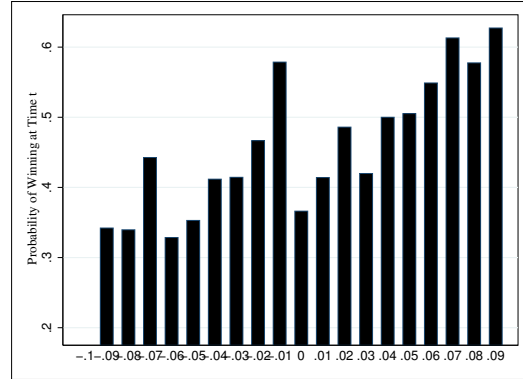
The bars show the actual probability of winning for candidates whose previous vote margin was in a specific bin. Bins are defined in increments of .01, and the bin labeled 0 thus represents margins of victory between 0 and .01 of the vote. The subgroup of "defection rules" candidates are candidates who 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

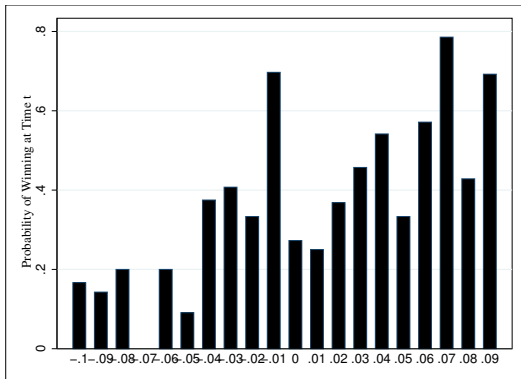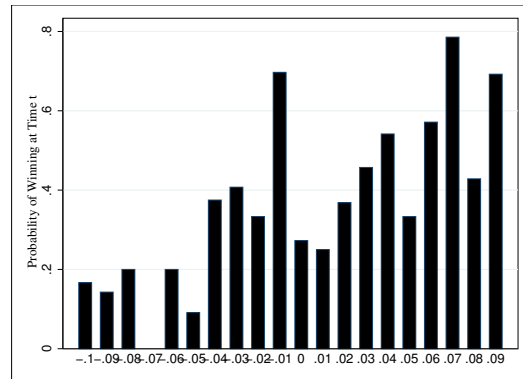The bars show the actual probability of winning for candidates whose previous vote margin was in a specific bin. Bins are defined in increments of .01, and the bin labeled 0 thus represents margins of victory between 0 and .01 of the vote. The subgroup of centralized parties is defined based on Kitschelt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

Table A.6: 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.7: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Additional Tests

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
Non-Close Parliament	-0.120	0.047	0.011	0.061	2016	.154
Close Parliament	-0.274	0.086	0.002	0.069	519	(.199)
4-30 Seats	-0.418	0.101	0.000	0.046	436	.318***
More than 31 Seats	-0.100	0.047	0.034	0.071	1933	(.112)
High Central Transfers	0.109	0.235	0.643	0.038	74	.278
Low Central Transfers	-0.169	0.051	0.001	0.055	1638	(.311)
Party Switcher	-0.193	0.048	0.000	0.054	1917	-.090
Non-Party Switcher	-0.103	0.076	0.175	0.096	579	(.101)
Low Running Rate	-0.068	0.054	0.202	0.067	1583	.156
High Running Rate	-0.224	0.072	0.002	0.046	867	(.101)

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)
More Organized Parties	0.077	0.069	0.263	0.067	829	.206**
Less Organized Parties	-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)

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). More organized party units are those coded by Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) as having an organization level greater than one during this period. 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(M)	0.323	0.208	0.120	0.059	142
CPI	-0.300	0.321	0.350	0.055	49

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.

Table A.10: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Major Parties

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
BJP	-0.133	0.047	0.005	0.061	1847	.143
Non-BJP	-0.277	0.085	0.001	0.070	596	(.124)
Congress	0.033	0.081	0.682	0.099	746	-.256**
Non-Congress	-0.223	0.057	0.000	0.057	1306	(.109)
BJP Post 1991	-0.284	0.088	0.001	0.073	555	.071
Non-BJP Post 1991	-0.213	0.060	0.000	0.056	1210	(.134)
Congress Post 1991	-0.064	0.169	0.705	0.048	190	-.273
Non-Congress Post 1991	-0.301	0.068	0.000	0.056	952	(.186)

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.

Table A.11: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Fixed Bandwidths

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.145	0.110	0.191	0.050	333	.379***
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.235	0.049	0.000	0.050	1806	(.125)
Less Organized Parties	-0.303	0.070	0.000	0.050	921	-.218**
More Organized Parties	-0.084	0.082	0.308	0.050	742	(.106)
Less Centralized Parties	-0.127	0.056	0.022	0.050	1489	.388***
More Centralized Parties	-0.515	0.113	0.000	0.050	285	.120
CPI(M)	0.278	0.221	0.209	0.050	133	.475**
Non-CPI(M)	-0.198	0.046	0.000	0.050	2027	(.215)

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). More organized party units are those coded by Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) as having an organization level greater than one during this period. 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: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Locally Quadratic Regression

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	0.069	0.082	0.402	0.102	635	.303***
Anti-Defection Rule	-0.235	0.049	0.000	0.050	1810	(.111)
Less Centralized Parties	-0.109	0.047	0.021	0.074	1969	.408***
Centralized Parties	-0.518	0.115	0.000	0.047	275	(.134)
More Organized Parties	-0.086	0.078	0.272	0.058	806	.226*
Less Organized Parties	-0.312	0.077	0.000	0.042	802	(.125)
CPI(M)	0.323	0.208	0.120	0.059	142	.520*
Non-CPI(M)	-0.197	0.043	0.000	0.058	2266	(.286)

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). More organized party units are those coded by Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) as having an organization level greater than one during this period. 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.13: Regression Discontinuity Estimates: Rerunning

Subsample	Estimate	SE	PValue	Bdwdth.	N	Difference
No Anti-Defection Rule	-0.143	0.184	0.436	0.012	215	-.255
Anti-Defection Rule	0.112	0.063	0.076	0.014	1206	(.209)
Less Centralized Parties	0.040	0.063	0.523	0.017	1233	-.284
Centralized Parties	0.325	0.158	0.040	0.012	175	(.240)
Less Organized Parties	0.130	0.094	0.167	0.011	547	.184
More Organized Parties	-0.054	0.107	0.612	0.013	455	(.161)
CPI(M)	0.078	0.063	0.217	0.012	1265	-.047
Non-CPI(M)	0.031	0.215	0.887	0.017	100	(.256)

The running variable is the individual's vote margin at time t. The outcome is whether the candidate ran in the same constituency at $t+1$. 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). More organized party units are those coded by Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2014) as having an organization level greater than one during this period. 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.14: Balance Tests, 5% Bandwidth

VARIABLES	(1) INC Vote	(2) Turnout	(3) Party Frag	(4) Small Party	(5) Nat. Incum.	(6) Cent. Party
Winner	-0.0410**	0	-0	0.00867	-0.00420	-0.0245
	(0.0201)	(0.395)	(0.00238)	(0.0118)	(0.0131)	(0.0188)
Constant	0.389***	61.65***	0.363***	0.0761***	0.339***	0.701***
	(0.0145)	(0.279)	(0.00168)	(0.00856)	(0.00924)	(0.0137)
Observations	2,307	2,454	5,232	2,121	5,232	2,437
R-squared	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001

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

These are linear regressions including only observations with a margin of victory of less than than 5% or greater than -5%. In independent variable is whether the candidates won the election. The dependent variables are noted in the column headings.

Table A.15: Logistic Regression: Controls

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized P.	(2) Defection Rule	(3)) CPIM
Loser Vote Margin	8.417	-14.49	15.27***
	(6.519)	(12.75)	(5.346)
Winner Vote Margin	6.313	10.02	11.04***
	(4.434)	(10.02)	(3.969)
Incumbent	-1.947***	-0.985	-2.038***
	(0.596)	(0.696)	(0.483)
Variable	0.351	0.859*	-0.362
	(0.434)	(0.451)	(0.688)
Variable*Incumbent	-0.864	-1.389**	2.124***
	(0.551)	(0.590)	(0.824)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	38.66**	35.62**	-4.573
	(16.73)	(14.03)	(34.33)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	19.42	-1.362	-29.98**
	(12.00)	(10.81)	(15.16)
National Incumbent	0.217	0.0945	0.0736
	(0.221)	(0.193)	(0.189)
Lagged Party Seats	-0.00140	-0.000499	-0.000217
	(0.00127)	(0.00105)	(0.000943)
Candidate Terms	-0.00663	-0.00874	0.0300
	(0.0694)	(0.0644)	(0.0566)
Lagged Herf.	0.493	-0.00112	0.135
	(1.062)	(0.946)	(0.944)
Reserved Seat	0.0517	-0.0268	0.000443
	(0.195)	(0.177)	(0.175)
National Incumbent*Incumbent	-0.410	-0.52**	-0.488**
	(0.266)	(0.234)	(0.231)
Lagged Party Seats*Incumbent	0.00180	0.00183	0.00202*
	(0.00152)	(0.00124)	(0.00116)
Candidate Terms *Incumbent	4.323***	5.081***	4.322***
	(1.325)	(1.185)	(1.187)
Lagged Herf.*Incumbent	-0.189	-0.0140	-7.76e-08
	(0.241)	(0.220)	(0.219)
Reserved Seat*Incumbent	0.0254	0.0595	0.0132
	(0.0807)	(0.0752)	(0.0688)
Constant	-0.157	-0.809	-0.206
	(0.479)	(0.540)	(0.377)
Year FE	YES	YES	YES
Observations	1,895	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.16: Logistic Regression: Alternative Hypotheses

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized P.	(2) Defection Rule	(3) CPIM
Loser Vote Margin	11.66 1	-24.43*	16.19**
	(8.055)	(14.23)	(6.611)
Winner Vote Margin	9.825*	13.70	13.17***
	(5.343)	(11.55)	(4.817)
Incumbent	-1.385	-1.769	-3.314***
	(1.364)	(1.358)	(1.197)
Variable	1.011*	1.198**	0.0188
	(0.597)	(0.523)	(0.708)
Variable*Incumbent	-2.110***	-1.714**	1.289
	(0.790)	(0.687)	(0.873)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	42.91*	52.05***	-13.32
	(22.27)	(16.13)	(35.45)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	22.57	-1.542	-8.961
	(18.87)	(12.61)	(18.02)
Urban	1.465	1.901*	1.868*
	(1.196)	(1.085)	(1.065)
Literacy	-3.224**	-3.912***	-3.710**
	(1.602)	(1.479)	(1.455)
Development Exp.	0.000613	6.30e-05	2.52e-05
	(0.000567)	(0.000506)	(0.000498)
SDPPC	1.53e-05	9.86e-06	1.82e-05
	(2.75e-05)	(2.65e-05)	(2.68e-05)
Incumbent*Development Exp.	-0.00112*	-0.000219	0.000108
	(0.000670)	(0.000602)	(0.000600)
Incumbent*SDPPC	-1.27e-05	-1.03e-05	-1.84e-05
	(2.98e-05)	(2.88e-05)	(2.90e-05)
Incumbent*Urban	-1.958	-2.311*	-2.047
	(1.398)	(1.269)	(1.257)
Incumbent*Literacy	6.927***	7.242***	6.070***
	(1.864)	(1.697)	(1.689)
Constant	-0.759	-0.467	0.465
	(1.048)	(1.016)	(0.868)
Year FE	YES	YES	YES
Observations	1,205	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.

Table A.17: Logistic Regression: Criminality

VARIABLES	(1) Centralized Party
Loser Vote Margin	-34.16
	(38.31)
Winner Vote Margin	-8.834
	(20.85)
Incumbent	1.710
	(1.352)
Variable	2.358
	(1.666)
Variable*Incumbent	-3.820*
	(2.070)
Variable*Loser Vote Margin	66.33
	(60.73)
Variable*Winner Vote Margin	49.25
	(46.39)
Lagged Charge	-0.00840
	(1.047)
Incumbent*Lagged Charge	0.189
	(1.208)
Constant	-1.954
	(1.209)
Observations	96

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.