

Climbing the Ranks: Incumbency Effects in Party-list Systems*

Jon H. Fiva[†] Helene Lie Røhr[‡]

Online Appendix

Abstract

Incumbents tend to have a solid electoral advantage in candidate-centered electoral settings. Do similar incumbency effects exist in more party-centered environments? We estimate incumbency effects in an open-list proportional representation system, exploiting that seats are first allocated *across* parties, and then to candidates *within* party lists. Using data from Norwegian local elections 2003-2015, we document that a candidate that barely wins a seat in the local council has about a 9 percentage points (43 percent) higher probability of being elected in the next election compared to a candidate that just misses out on a seat on the same party list. We find no evidence that voters contribute to this personal incumbency advantage. Rather, it seems as if party elites are instrumental in securing the electoral success of their party affiliates. We show that incumbents and non-incumbents run again in the subsequent election at about equal rates, but that incumbents tend to advance in the party hierarchy and obtain safer ballot positions in future elections, which is what ultimately leads to electoral success.

Keywords: Incumbency Advantage, Proportional Representation, Regression Discontinuity Design.

JEL Classification: C21, D72

*Manuscript accepted for publication at *European Economic Review*. We are grateful to the Associate Editor, three anonymous referees, Jørgen Andersen, Ron Freier, Ben Geys, Andy Hall, Askill Halse, Leif Helland, Heléne Lundqvist, Pär Nyman, Dan Smith, Jim Snyder, and Rune Sørensen for helpful comments and suggestions. We thank Dag Arne Christensen and Johannes Bergh for sharing data and Ingar Petterson, Kristoffer Sanner, and Reidar Vøllo for data collection assistance.

[†]BI Norwegian Business School. E-mail: jon.h.fiva@bi.no

[‡]BI Norwegian Business School and Telenor Research. E-mail: helene.l.rohr@bi.no

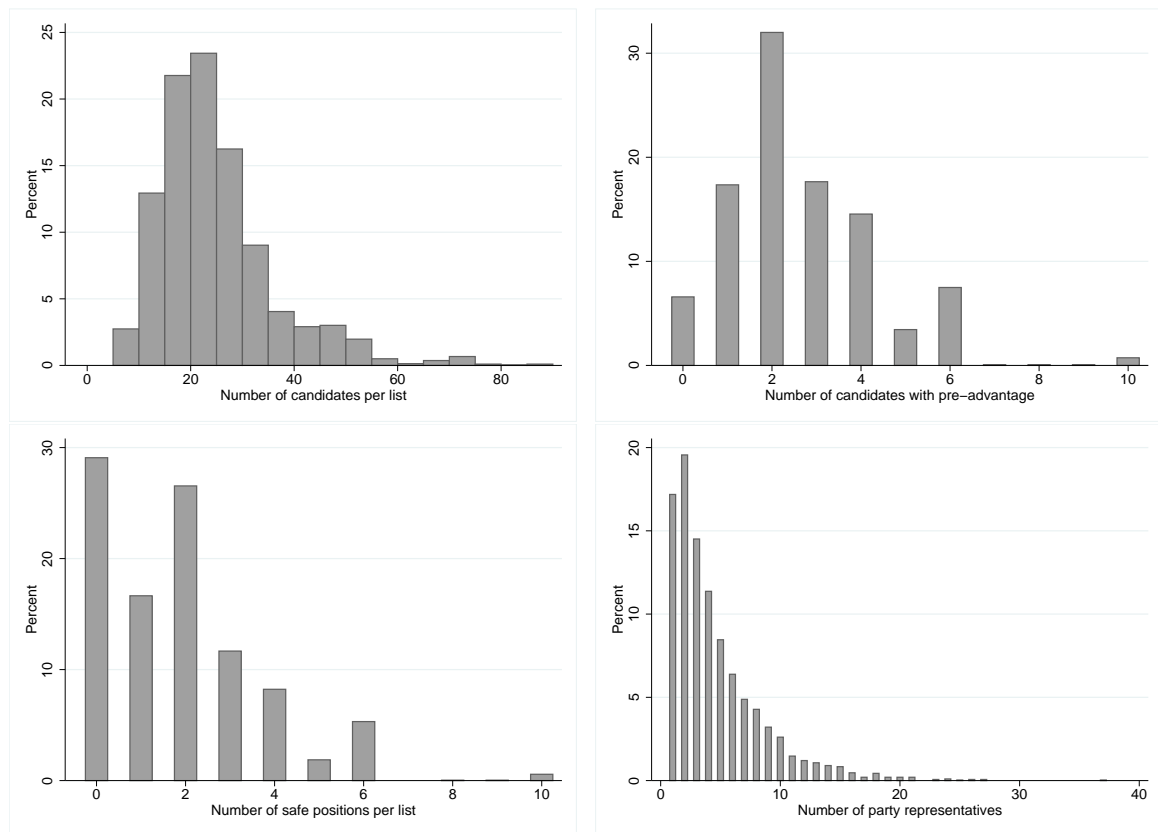
Online Appendix A: Supplementary analysis

Figure A.1: Example of Ballot from Oslo Labor Party 2015

Arbeiderpartiet Kommunestyrevalget 2015 i Oslo		Arbeiderpartiet Kommunestyrevalget 2015 i Oslo		• Se veiledning på baksiden • Brett stemmeseddel med farget side ut	
Personstemme (sett kryss i rute foran kandidat) 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Raymond Johansen , f. 1961, Bydel Alna 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Tone Tollevik Dahl , f. 1970, Bydel Sagene 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Rina Mariann Hansen , f. 1977, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Frode Jacobsen , f. 1968, Bydel Østernsja 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anders Røberg-Larsen , f. 1978, Bydel Grorud 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Khamshajiny Gunaratnam , f. 1988, Bydel Grorud 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Andreas Halse , f. 1977, Bydel Gamle Oslo 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria Marie Evensen , f. 1980, Bydel Grønneleika 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Didrik Beck , f. 1991, Bydel Gamle Oslo 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Julie Lødrup , f. 1983, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Rune Gerhardsen , f. 1946, Bydel Nordstrand 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Turid Birkeland , f. 1962, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Abdullah Alsabeehj , f. 1986, Bydel S. Nordstrand 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Susann Jørgensen , f. 1972, Bydel Gamle Oslo 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Dag Bayegan-Hariem , f. 1977, Bydel Vestre Aker 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Roja Daran , f. 1983, Bydel Alna 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Frode Kyvåg , f. 1946, Bydel Nordstrand 18. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mari Morken , f. 1984, Bydel Alna 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Per Anders Langerød , f. 1985, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 20. <input type="checkbox"/> Gro Balas , f. 1960, Bydel Vestre Aker 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Jon Reidar Øyan , f. 1981, Bydel Gamle Oslo 22. <input type="checkbox"/> Isa Viksværten Larsen , f. 1962, Bydel Grønneleika 23. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mohammar Banaras , f. 1976, Bydel Grorud 24. <input type="checkbox"/> Birgit Skarstein , f. 1989, Bydel Frogner 25. <input type="checkbox"/> Nadeem Butt , f. 1986, Bydel S. Nordstrand 26. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prableen Kaur , f. 1996, Bydel Grorud 27. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jørn Nygren , f. 1964, Bydel Stovner 28. <input type="checkbox"/> Bente M. Larsen , f. 1964, Bydel Nordre Aker 29. <input type="checkbox"/> Nasir Ahmed , f. 1983, Bydel Østernsja 30. <input type="checkbox"/> Katrine Ore , f. 1963, Bydel Ullern		31. <input type="checkbox"/> Milos Rados , f. 1992, Bydel Grønneleika 32. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lena Sæteri , f. 1971, Bydel Alna 33. <input type="checkbox"/> Geir Lippestad , f. 1964, Bydel Nordstrand 34. <input type="checkbox"/> Anne Nyeggen , f. 1964, Bydel Nordstrand 35. <input type="checkbox"/> Jørgen Foss , f. 1969, Bydel Nordre Aker 36. <input type="checkbox"/> Gro Bratteli Jamholt , f. 1976, Bydel Gamle Oslo 37. <input type="checkbox"/> Erling O. Turtum , f. 1976, Bydel Østernsja 38. <input type="checkbox"/> Zaineb Al-Samarai , f. 1987, Bydel Grønneleika 39. <input type="checkbox"/> Elvis Chi Nwosu , f. 1965, Bydel S. Nordstrand 40. <input type="checkbox"/> Fatima Ali Madar , f. 1974, Bydel Grønneleika 41. <input type="checkbox"/> Ulrik Imtiaz Røfseth , f. 1972, Bydel Nordre Aker 42. <input type="checkbox"/> Vestermøy Kjendstøl , f. 1947, Bydel Østernsja 43. <input type="checkbox"/> Khalid Mahmood , f. 1959, Bydel Østernsja 44. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chameh Maram Joof , f. 1966, Bydel Alna 45. <input type="checkbox"/> Andreas Olsen , f. 1974, Bydel Gamle Oslo 46. <input type="checkbox"/> Milla Sandberg Mathisen , f. 1993, Bydel Vestre Aker 47. <input type="checkbox"/> Sigurd Log Røren , f. 1987, Bydel Frogner 48. <input type="checkbox"/> Agnes Nærland Viljugrein , f. 1977, Bydel Gamle Oslo 49. <input type="checkbox"/> Ervin Sundal , f. 1961, Bydel Nordstrand 50. <input type="checkbox"/> Torunn Karutte Husvik , f. 1983, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 51. <input type="checkbox"/> Arshad Mubarak Ali , f. 1987, Bydel Østernsja 52. <input type="checkbox"/> Karina Hellum , f. 1981, Bydel Sagene 53. <input type="checkbox"/> Henrik Hovland , f. 1965, Bydel St. Hanshaugen 54. <input type="checkbox"/> Maika Godal Dam , f. 1987, Bydel Nordre Aker 55. <input type="checkbox"/> Hans Christian Lillehagen , f. 1970, Bydel Gamle Oslo 56. <input type="checkbox"/> Lenne Løken , f. 1947, Bydel Frogner 57. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Munir Jaber , f. 1990, Bydel Alna 58. <input type="checkbox"/> Line Tresselt , f. 1983, Bydel Grønneleika 59. <input type="checkbox"/> Gard Sandaker-Nielsen , f. 1978, Bydel Grønneleika 60. <input type="checkbox"/> Marianne Andersen , f. 1990, Bydel Gamle Oslo 61. <input type="checkbox"/> Bashe Musse , f. 1985, Bydel Gamle Oslo		62. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monica Semb Sætre , f. 1982, Bydel Bjerke 63. <input type="checkbox"/> Pia Gjesme Holm , f. 1973, Bydel Vestre Aker 64. <input type="checkbox"/> Eskil Pedersen , f. 1984, Bydel Grønneleika 65. <input type="checkbox"/> Thorvald Stoltenberg , f. 1931, Bydel Frogner	
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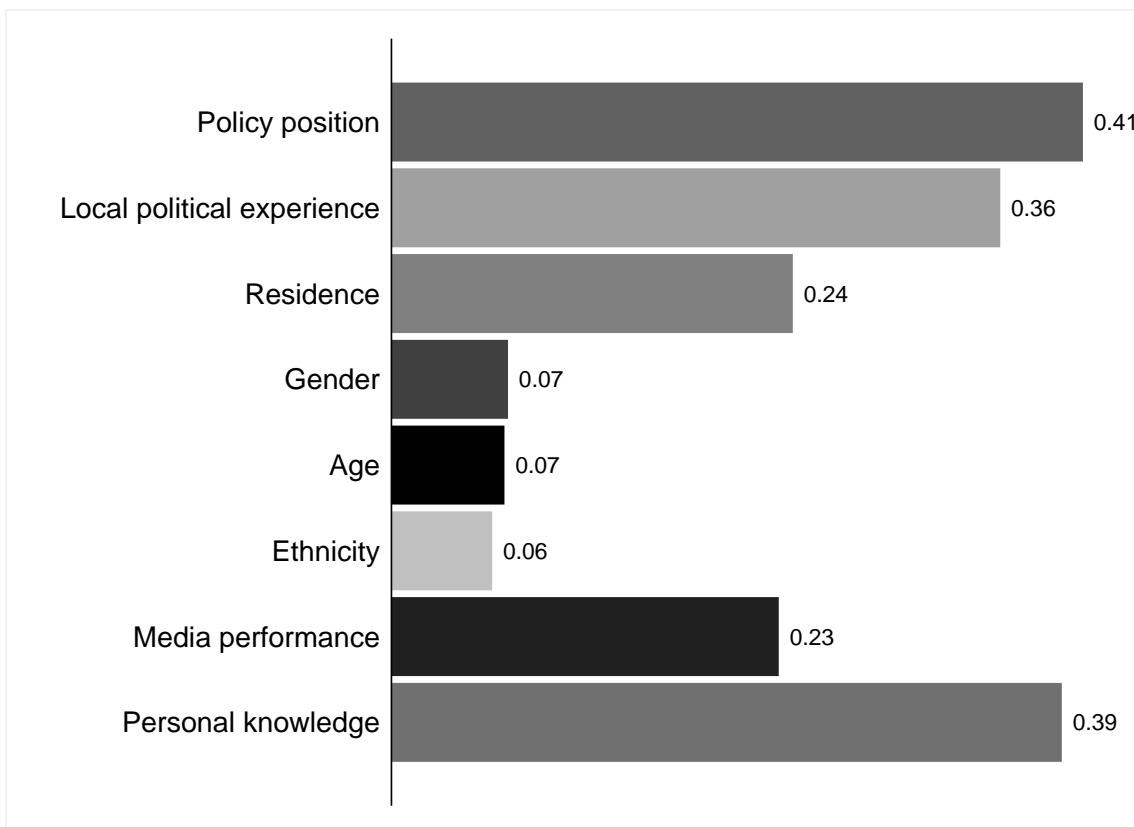
Note: The figure shows the ballot paper from Oslo Arbeiderparti (Labor Party) for the 2015 election and how voters can cast personal votes. The first ten candidates on the ballot are in boldface and hence have a pre-advantage. The ballot changes illustrated in the example yields personal votes for the check-marked candidates. To cast personal votes to candidates from a different party, those candidates' name and party has to be listed in the table to the bottom right. Source: <https://goruddalslista.wordpress.com/>

Figure A.2: Number of candidates running, with a pre-advantage, in a safe position, and winning a seat by party list



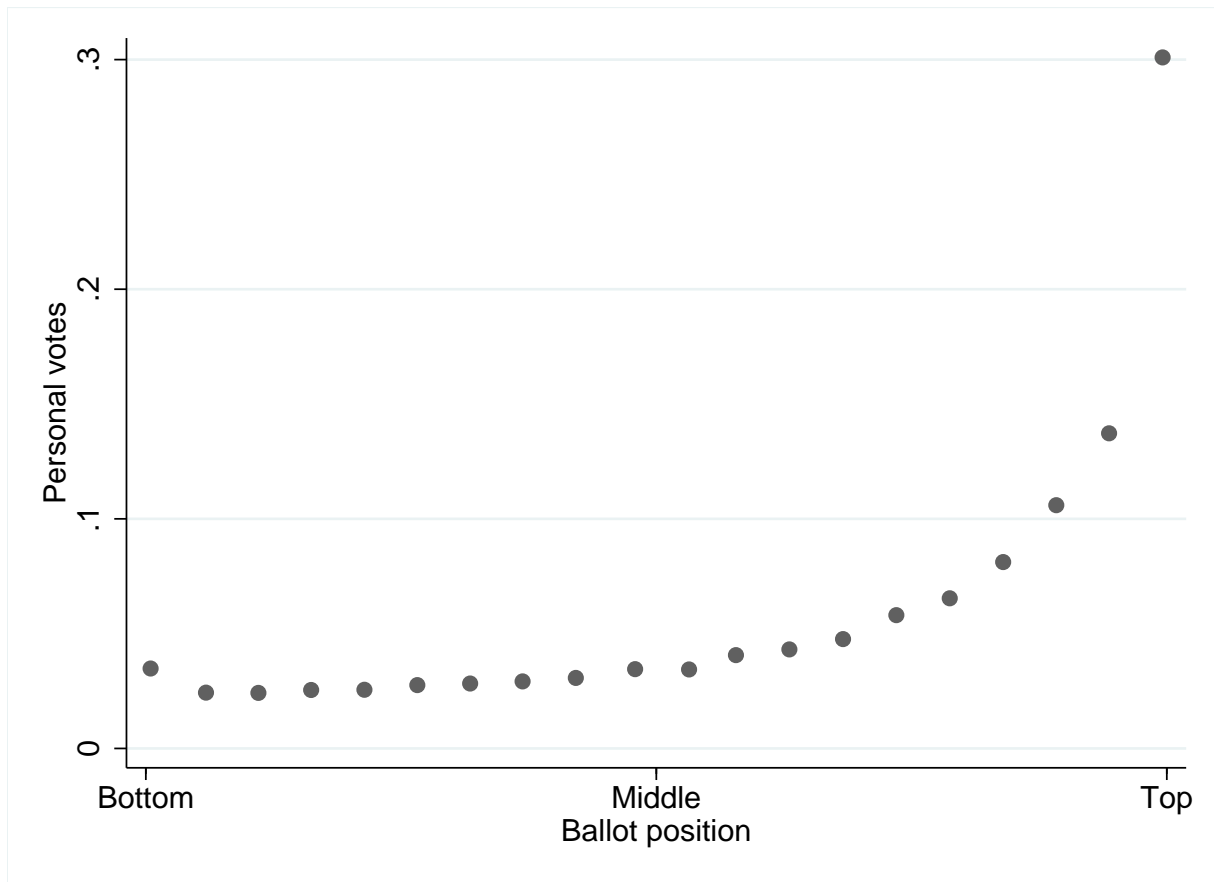
Note: Using the party list as the unit of observation, this figure shows histograms for the number of candidates running (upper left-hand panel), the number of candidates with pre-advantage (upper right-hand panel), the number of candidates with a safe position (lower left-hand panel), and the number of candidates winning a seat (lower right-hand panel).

Figure A.3: Voter motivation for casting personal votes: Survey evidence



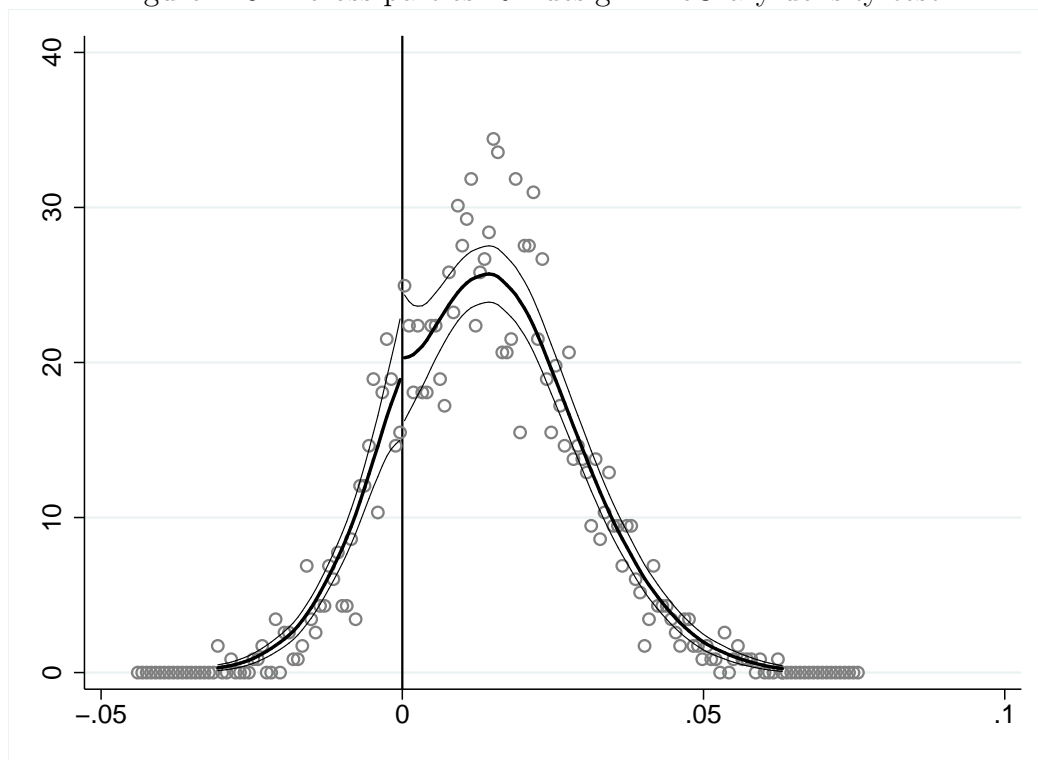
Note: The figure presents survey evidence of voters' motivation to change the ballot. Reported are the fraction of survey respondents answering that they changed the ballot because the reason given in the legend played a 'major role'. Alternative responses are 'don't know', 'don't want to answer', 'no role', and 'some role'. Data from the 2007 Local Election Survey (Lokalvalgsundersøkelsen) (n= 970).

Figure A.4: The relationship between ballot position and personal votes



Note: The figure shows the relationship between candidates' standardized ballot position and personal votes as a share of party list votes. The standardized ballot position takes values from 0 (bottom position) to 1 (top position). Each bin is the average of 310 observations. The figure is produced with the `binscatter` module in Stata.

Figure A.5: Across-parties RD design: McCrary density test



Note: The sample is restricted to the seven main parties in Norwegian politics. We only include lists winning zero or one seat in the council ($N=1,575$).

Table A.1: Within-list RD analysis when covariates are included

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
RD estimate	0.079*** (0.019)	0.081*** (0.019)	0.081*** (0.019)	0.079*** (0.021)
Female		-0.053*** (0.015)	-0.055*** (0.015)	
Age		0.017*** (0.003)	0.017*** (0.003)	
Age ² /1000		-0.195*** (0.035)	-0.193*** (0.035)	
Ballot position, election t			0.033 (0.030)	
R2	0.015	0.027	0.028	0.233
List fixed effect	No	No	No	Yes

Note: The sample is restricted to candidates that are less than 10 percentage points from winning/losing a seat. The reported RD estimates correspond to β_1 from equation (3). In Column (2), we include controls for candidates' age, age-squared and gender. In (3) we control linearly for ballot position (standardized). The standardized ballot position takes values from 0 (bottom position) to 1 (top position). Column (4) includes list fixed effects. All specifications include separate linear control functions on each side of the discontinuity (not shown), estimated with a uniform kernel. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A.2: Sample split by population size

Panel A: Municipalities with below median population size

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.067*	-0.049	0.005	0.009	0.008
	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.037)	(0.023)	(0.010)
Bandwidth	0.165	0.162	0.127	0.127	0.076

Panel B: Municipalities with above median population size

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.094***	0.031	0.060**	0.053***	0.003
	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.003)
Bandwidth	0.089	0.073	0.087	0.076	0.034

*Note: Each cell represent RD estimates from a local linear specification using the optimal bandwidth calculated by the Calonico et al. (2016) algorithm and triangular kernel. Outcome variables are explained in Table 2. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.*

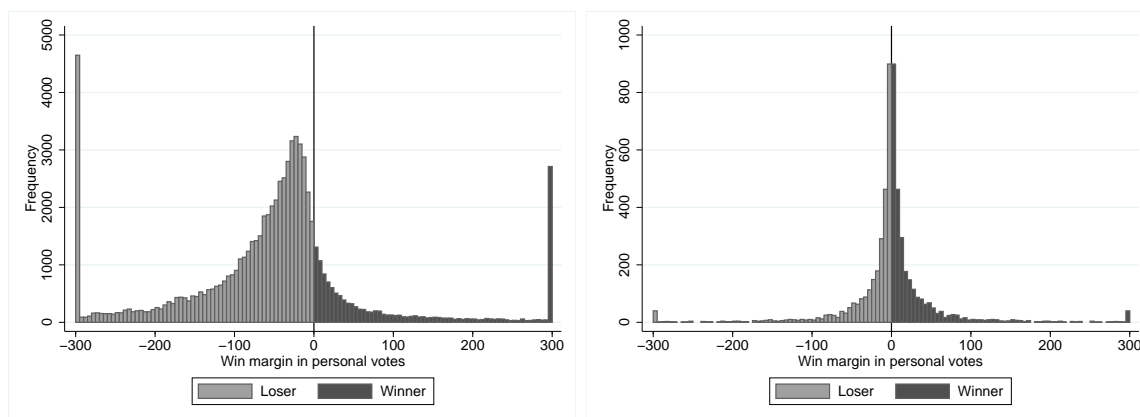
Table A.3: RD Analysis of becoming the first deputy councilor

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.064***	0.031	0.059***	0.009	0.006
	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.004)
Bandwidth	0.083	0.070	0.059	0.076	0.022

*Note: Each cell represent RD estimates based on equation (3) using the optimal bandwidth calculated by the Calonico et al. (2016) algorithm. Outcome variables are explained in Table 2. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.*

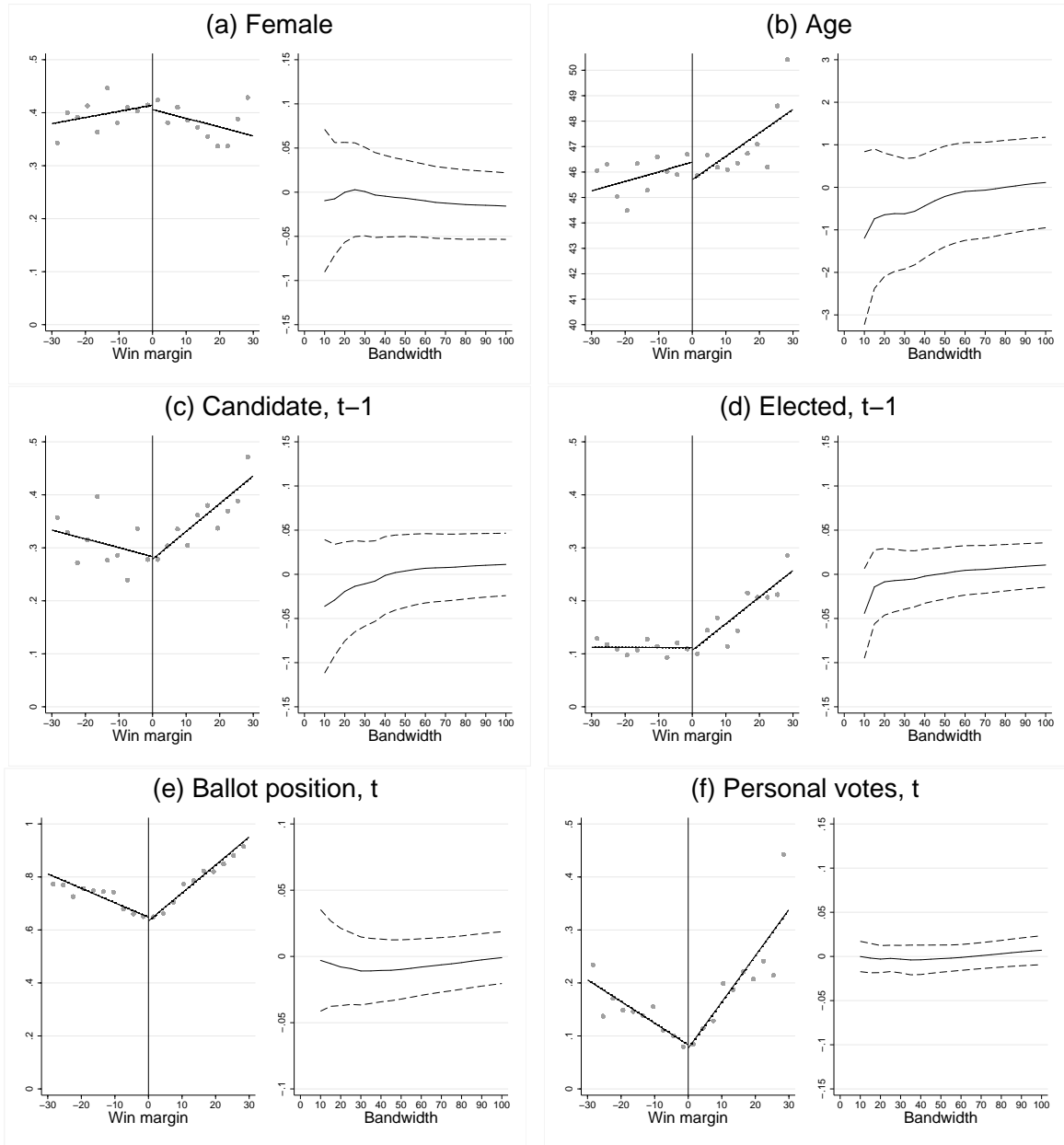
Online Appendix B: Unstandardized win margin

Figure B.1: Frequency of observations by distance to seat threshold



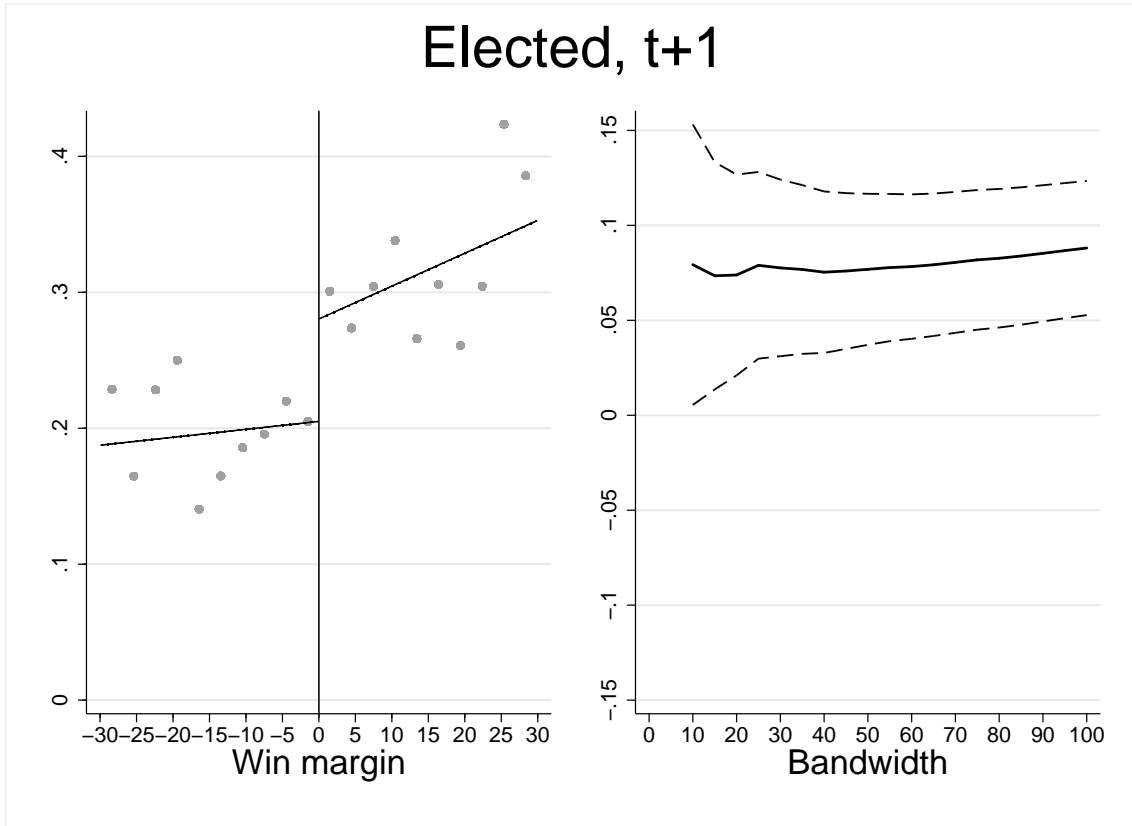
Note: The figure to the left shows the number of observations by the distance to the threshold for winning a seat, while the figure to the right shows the number of observations when limiting the sample to borderline defeated and borderline elected candidates. The figures are truncated at ± 300 . Each bin is for an interval of five personal vote. Ties are excluded.

Figure B.2: RD plots: Covariates



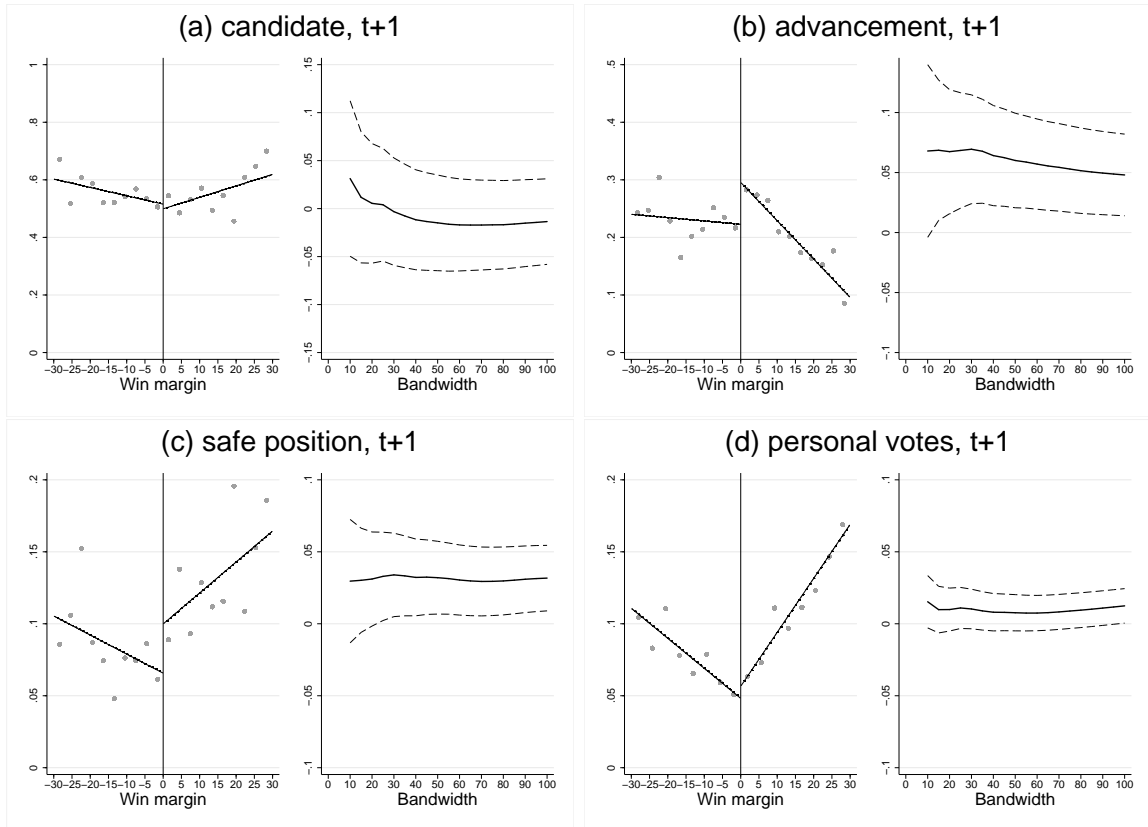
Note: The figure presents results on covariate balance for eight different variables (given in the title of each panel). Plots to the left are standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 30 votes ($N = 4,918$). Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. The solid vertical line in each plot represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for three-vote intervals. The plots to the right display RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. RD estimates are based on local linear specification using a triangular kernel. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Figure B.3: RD Plot: The personal incumbency advantage



Note: Plots to the left are standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 30 votes ($N=4,166$). Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. The vertical line in each plot represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for three-vote intervals. The plots to the right display RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. RD estimates are based on a local linear specification with a triangular kernel. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Figure B.4: RD Plots: Mechanisms



Note: Plots to the left are standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 30 votes ($N = 4,166$). Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. The vertical line in each plot represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for three-vote intervals. The plots to the right display RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. RD estimates are based on a local linear specification with a triangular kernel. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table B.1: Results from regression discontinuity estimation

Panel A: Local linear specification - triangular kernel					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.078*** (0.024)	-0.003 (0.029)	0.069*** (0.023)	0.034** (0.015)	0.010 (0.007)
Panel B: Local linear specification - uniform kernel					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.073*** (0.022)	-0.016 (0.028)	0.068*** (0.022)	0.032** (0.014)	0.007 (0.007)
Panel C: Local quadratic specification - triangular kernel					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.075** (0.033)	0.021 (0.038)	0.065** (0.032)	0.029 (0.020)	0.011 (0.009)
Panel D: Local quadratic specification - uniform kernel					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Elected	Candidate	Advance	Safe	Votes
RD estimate	0.085*** (0.030)	0.017 (0.035)	0.072** (0.029)	0.038* (0.020)	0.016* (0.009)

Note: Each cell represent RD estimates based on equation (3) using a bandwidth of 30 votes ($N = 4,166$). Outcome variables are explained in Table 2. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.