Electoral Dis-connection: The Limits of Re-Election in Contexts of Weak Accountability

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Abstract

Holding politicians accountable through re-election has long been a focus of empirical work, yet results are mixed as to whether electoral accountability works in practice. I offer a new theory of voter behavior to explain why electoral accountability may break down. Where voters perceive a greater likelihood of malfeasance in a second term, information about good performance in the first term becomes irrelevant to predicting good performance in the second. Accordingly, voters turn to other accountability institutions for assurance that re-elected incumbents will perform well. I test this argument in the context of mayoral politics in Peru. In a conjoint experiment embedded in an original survey, respondents prefer challengers even when explicitly informed the incumbent performed well, and the effect is strongest among those who doubt good performance will continue if re-elected and who report their belief that incumbents learn how to be corrupt on the job. Using a regression discontinuity design, I then show that mayors face a significant incumbency disadvantage, and that neither good performance nor voters' access to performance information enables mayors to overcome it. Instead, it is voter trust in horizontal accountability institutions that helps attenuate anti-incumbency bias. Together, these results suggest that attempts to improve electoral accountability by expanding voter access to performance information may prove inadequate without strong central-level oversight and, more broadly, that the vertical accountability of re-elections may fail to generate political accountability when horizontal accountability institutions are weak.

When does re-election actually succeed in generating electoral accountability? At a minimum, voters have to be both willing to re-elect incumbents and to base their re-election decision at least in part on incumbent performance (Ashworth 2012), not only punishing poor performers, but also, crucially, rewarding good ones as well (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999). An emerging literature suggests, however, that in contrast to findings from the United States and other developed democracies, some developing countries exhibit an incumbency disadvantage, with incumbents systematically less likely than challengers to be elected at the subsequent election (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik 2017; Uppal 2009). In such contexts, we know little about why a bias against incumbents develops nor if good performance in office ameliorates their electoral handicap, making electoral accountability still possible. If not, what explains the success of the incumbents that are re-elected, despite their electoral disadvantage?

To address these questions, my argument begins from the contention that a local-level incumbency disadvantage can emerge when voters doubt that incumbents will continue to perform well in office if given another chance. This may be particularly likely if second-term mayors are assumed to more successfully engage in corruption than newly elected challengers, given on-the-job learning about how to avoid detection and the development of networks of collusion (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja 2016). Weak oversight institutions mean incumbents may be particularly willing to act on this new knowledge because they face little risk of punishment if caught. Voters may then perceive that any draw from the challenger pool, who by default will be in her first term, will be less corrupt than a re-elected incumbent.

However, a perception of strong governmental oversight of politicians may attenuate this type of incumbency disadvantage. Where horizontal accountability institutions, like the judiciary, Ombudsmen or Supreme Auditing Agency, effectively oversee politicians' behavior, they provide strong assurances that re-elected incumbents will be constrained in office. Information about current performance may therefore become an uninformative signal of future performance, unless it is coupled with credible enforcement of politicians' behavior.

The vertical accountability of re-election can thereby fail to generate political accountability when horizontal accountability institutions are weak.

I test this argument in the context of mayoral elections in Peru. Using electoral returns data from three elections, I first use a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to show that Peruvian mayors face an extreme incumbency disadvantage. Incumbents who narrowly won in the previous election—making their win "as-if" random—are 24 percentage points more likely to lose the subsequent election than the candidates that ran and barely lost.

Next, as an alternative test of the incumbency disadvantage, and to assess my argument that positive performance information may become uninformative to voters in re-elections, I embed a candidate choice conjoint experiment within an original household survey. Respondents are presented with two hypothetical candidates, an incumbent and a challenger, and are asked which candidate they would vote for in a mayoral election. They are told explicitly about the incumbent's performance, with five possible information conditions: no performance information; good (bad) performance in implementing public works projects; and good (bad) performance in providing individual financial assistance to constituents.

The results demonstrate that respondents on average prefer challengers to incumbents, even when those incumbents were described as performing well. In support of my proposed mechanism of on-the-job learning and corruption, I show that the effect is concentrated among respondents who doubt that a high-performing incumbent will repeat her good performance if re-elected, and who believe that incumbent corruption increases across terms.

Finally, to test my argument that confidence in oversight institutions helps attenuate the incumbency disadvantage, I use a heterogeneous treatment effects set-up within the RDD design to study whether certain characteristics of the candidate or the municipality in which she runs condition anti-incumbency bias. In line with the conjoint's findings, results suggest that among barely-winning incumbents, those who perform well are no more likely to win re-election than than those who perform poorly. Nor are incumbents more likely to be victorious where voters have greater access to political information. However, when

incumbents run in districts where voters report higher trust in horizontal accountability institutions, they gain an electoral advantage relative to candidates in the previous election that ran and barely lost. A number of robustness checks and tests of alternative explanations support the validity of the results.

The findings have important implications for electoral accountability and beyond. Part of Mayhew's famous concept of the "electoral connection" (1974) is that the incumbent's action in the current period is constrained by her desire for re-election in the next and by her assessment about what criteria voters will use to judge whether she should be re-elected. If incumbents recognize that their chances of being rewarded for their effort are low, their incentive to perform well in office is reduced. Although more research has traditionally focused on voters punishing poor performers, rewarding good performance is just as important for ensuring responsive and high quality governance (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999). Furthermore, persistent disillusionment with politicians, such as the anti-incumbent attitudes shown here, may generate a self-reinforcing pattern whereby voters increasingly assume the worst about incumbents who then increasingly live up to those low expectations. Over time, this could also lead to disillusionment with democracy itself (Svolik 2013).

This paper contributes to the broader literature on voting behavior in developing countries, including the recent scholarship on the incumbency disadvantage (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik 2017; Uppal 2009). It most directly addresses the work on electoral accountability, which largely focuses on the role of performance information and the assumption that increasing access to information will generate electoral accountability (see, e.g., Dunning et al. 2019). In contrast, my findings suggest that even where voters have accurate information about the aspects of performance they value, electoral accountability can fail if current performance no longer predicts future performance. Relatedly, the results build on recent studies of voters with accurate performance information who appear to punish good performers (Adida et al. 2017; Boas, Hidalgo, and Toral 2019; Bursztyn 2016; De Kadt and Lieberman 2017). However, in these cases, voters "punish" good policy perfor-

mance in one domain because they would have preferred the incumbent deliver on another. My findings therefore suggest a new type of case, as respondents punish incumbents who perform well in the very policies that they prioritize.

As I discuss in the conclusion, the argument applies to a number of other Latin American countries and beyond. The combination of high corruption and weak states can lead voters to believe even good performers will be corrupted if given the chance. Strong parties may mediate the effect by giving politicians an incentive to perform and by increasing incumbent re-election through partisan loyalty and the distribution of clientelist goods. But weak party systems, particularly those without the types of non-party political organization that facilitate clientelistic exchange, lack the organizational infrastructure to get incumbents re-elected amid rising voter doubt about second-term performance.

1 Theory

The logic of electoral accountability is that voters use information about how the incumbent performed when they choose how to vote in re-elections (Ashworth 2012). Much theorizing focuses on the role of performance information, with accounts varying in their emphasis on the extent to which voters have accurate information (Dunning et al. 2019), attribute blame (Martin and Raffler Forthcoming), and judge new information relative to prior beliefs (Bhandari, Larreguy, and Marshall 2019). My argument about information is distinct: even if voters have accurate performance metrics that are relevant to the issues they value, electoral accountability can break down if current performance no longer predicts future performance. Where voters perceive incumbents as more likely to be corrupt in subsequent terms, vote choice is less influenced by performance in office, and more impacted by their assessment of whether oversight is strong enough to constrain incumbent behavior if granted another term.

My theory offers a challenge to Fearon's (1999) selection model, in which voters assess candidates in order to identify and elect "good types," meaning politicians that will imple-

ment voters' preferred policies. Voters have a variety of information at their disposal to assess type, from party affiliation to personal traits to platform promises. For incumbents, voters have an extra, albeit noisy, source of information: performance in office. Voters retrospectively assess performance to make a prospective decision about the incumbent's type, compared to what voters glean from available information about challengers.

In this framework, a good type politician is one whose likelihood of performing well in office—meaning performing the way the voter wants—is high. I depart from standard accounts of retrospective voting by emphasizing that in some settings, as voters consider whether to re-elect the incumbent, they make two separate evaluations: one about past performance in office; and a second about the probability that the performance will be repeated. For incumbents to be rewarded, good performance must not only allow voters to infer type, but it must also act as a credible signal of the likelihood of continued good performance if elected again.

In most settings, current performance in office *is* a strong predictor of future performance, as whatever component of type—inherent goodness, shared policy preferences, capacity to implement, or external incentive to perform—will continue into the next term. Though standard accountability models (e.g., Fearon 1999; Svolik 2013) assume continuity of type across terms, this may not hold if voters perceive a higher probability of engaging in corruption in a second term, even among incumbents who appeared to perform well in the first. Learning on the job may provide second-term politicians with a greater understanding of how to be corrupt without getting caught, both by better navigating the systems designed to detect malfeasance and identifying potential co-conspirators within government agencies and the business community (Coviello and Gagliarducci 2017; Fisman, Schulz, and Vig 2014; Klašnja 2015). At the same time, weak oversight institutions mean the likelihood of punishment is small, even if detected. If the returns to corruption are high enough, and the likelihood of being caught and punished low enough, even good performers in the first term could capitalize on their learning and become corrupted in the second.

Evidence from other contexts of high corruption and weak oversight provides empirical support for the notion that corruption may increase across terms. Incumbents who narrowly won accumulated more wealth during their second term than narrowly-elected first-term politicians, both among mayors in Romania (Klašnja 2015) and state-level politicians in India (Fisman, Schulz, and Vig 2014). Similarly, the procurement practices of narrowly-elected second-term Italian mayors differ from narrowly-elected first-term mayors in ways that suggest corruption through collusion with contractors (Coviello and Gagliarducci 2017).

Increasing corruption in a second term makes voters tend to prefer challengers even against high-performing incumbents, because it increases the probability that the draw of a candidate from the challenger pool—who by default will be in her first term—will perform better than the good type who will be corrupted in the second (Klašnja 2015, 2016). Klašnja also argues that an incumbency disadvantage stemming from increasing corruption could be overcome if incumbents can convince voters that the quality of their performance also increases over time. I contend there may be a different solution to the incumbency disadvantage generated by increasing corruption across terms: strengthening horizontal accountability. With increasing corruption, voters need some assurance of a check on politicians' power in order to believe that an incumbent will perform well if re-elected. This assurance, I argue, can come through trust in the effectiveness of horizontal accountability institutions.

Where the vertical accountability of elections—so named for the vertical relationship between voters, as principals, and politicians, as agents (Ashworth 2012)—is a form of external, non-government control, horizontal accountability refers to state oversight that comes from within. The system of checks and balances, such as Congress keeping a check on executive power, and "appointed" institutions given the autonomy to oversee other state agencies, like Ombudsmen, Supreme Auditing Institutions or special prosecutors, are all examples of horizontal accountability institutions (O'Donnell 1998). Even in weak institutional environments, monitoring initiatives undertaken by oversight agencies can incentivize politicians and bureaucrats to perform well, particularly in terms of reducing corruption (Lagunes 2018,

2019; Olken 2007; Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2003). Effective oversight institutions can even incentivize mayors to perform in the absence of electoral incentives, such as with term limits (Ferraz and Finan 2011). Sanctions may be particularly important when norms of good behavior in elected office are weak (Fisman and Miguel 2007).

By generating a credible threat of being punished, strong oversight institutions keep the opportunity cost of corruption constant across terms. Although incumbents learn how to lower their risk of being caught, if the threat of punishment is high enough, second-term politicians will be deterred from acting on their new knowledge. Strong oversight can thereby help ensure that good first term performance is a useful informational signal to predict future good performance, by increasing the probability high-performing incumbents will perform well in a second term relative to the potential performance of first-term challengers.

Importantly, indicators of institutional strength may have an ambiguous effect on voter behavior. On the one hand, if voters see an increase in cases of politicians being punished for corruption, they may perceive that oversight institutions are effective and thus be more likely to trust an incumbent with a second term. On the other hand, they could interpret a rise in prosecutions as proof that politicians are more corrupt than they thought, thereby decreasing their willingness to re-elect. In contrast, voter perceptions of the efficacy of horizontal accountability institutions would have an unambiguous impact on voter behavior.

To assess my theory, I test the following observable predictions.

> **Prediction 1:** Politicians face an incumbency disadvantage, with voters on average preferring challengers to incumbents.

If the incumbency disadvantage is due to voter skepticism about incumbent performance in a second term, then:

> **Prediction 2a:** Voters will on average tend toward preferring challengers even over incumbents who perform well.

And, more specifically,

Prediction 2b: Voters will particularly prefer challengers to the extent that they doubt high-performing incumbents will repeat their good performance if re-elected.

Prediction 2c: Voters will particularly prefer challengers to the extent that they believe incumbents' likelihood of engaging in corruption increases across terms.

Finally, if in such settings, voters turn to oversight institutions for assurance that incumbents will perform well in a second term, then:

Prediction 3: Voters will be more willing to vote for incumbents in re-elections when they have greater trust in horizontal accountability institutions.

Before turning to the empirical analysis of the Peruvian case, I provide a brief background for the context of the study, including describing horizontal accountability institutions, the prevalence of corruption and the perception that it increases across terms.

2 Accountability and Local Elections in Peru

This study focuses on the most local level of government in Peru, the district municipality.[3] Mayors have significant responsibilities for managing local affairs and providing public services, from trash clean up and granting business licenses, to building roads, irrigation systems, health centers and schools, generating municipal ordinances and overseeing the town's yearly development plan. Citizen participation in municipal affairs is also required by law, including through participatory budgeting (McNulty 2011). Districts are largely reliant on central government transfers for their budgets (Loayza, Rigolini, and Calvo-González 2014).

Elections are held every four years to elect both the district mayor and a group of councilors (*regidores*) who are proportionally allocated seats on the City Council (*Concejo*

[3] Peru is divided into 25 regions, 195 provinces and 1647 municipalities. For ease, I use the terms 'district' and 'municipality' interchangeably.

Municipal) based on party voteshare. In addition to passing municipal ordinances, councilors are charged with overseeing the mayor's performance and receiving citizen complaints. Voting is mandatory and fines for not voting are enforced, leading to relatively high voting rates (Carpio et al. 2019). Mayors could be re-elected indefinitely until a 2015 law banned immediate re-election beginning in the subsequent local elections held in October 2018.

Finally, as an important scope condition of the argument is the frailty of political parties and clientelistic organization, it is worth noting Peru's party system is extremely weak (Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Seawright 2012). The party system breakdown that began in the 1990s ushered in an incredible proliferation of regional, provincial and sometimes even district-level parties, and of quasi-party groupings and alliances. Local political organization is also sufficiently frail that it makes long-term clientelistic exchange difficult (Muñoz 2019).

2.1 Horizontal Accountability Institutions

I provide a brief overview of the horizontal accountability institutions that are designed to constrain incumbents' behavior. Importantly, these are visible, well-known organizations, based out of the capital, Lima, but with a decentralized network of offices throughout the country. There are a range of channels via which voters may either directly experience or hear second-hand about the oversight activities of these institutions, thereby impacting their assessment of the institutions' effectiveness. For example, these organizations engage in direct outreach with citizens, including receiving and processing citizen complaints, they receive media attention for their investigative reports, and run educational activities like campaigns against vote buying.

First, the *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsmen Office) investigates governments' compliance with their various legal requirements. The *Defensoría* receives and investigates citizen complaints against any level of government or type of government agency, including against mayors. Complaints can be lodged over the phone, online, or in person at one of the 38 offices located throughout the country, including in every region, and at outreach events

the *Defensoría* sets up, for example, in village town squares or markets. In 2014 alone, they processed 31,189 complaints (Defensoría del Pueblo 2015). They then conduct in-person visits to local governments to investigate complaints and develop remedies with the relevant officials. Though they have no formal sanctioning power, they make recommendations to other sanctioning bodies and use the soft power of publicity through disseminating their findings to the media. They also engage in media campaigns, for example, to educate voters about the illegality of vote buying.

Second, Peru's National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones - JNE)* not only oversees elections, but also takes a proactive role in educating the public about electoral laws. They also manage the formal complaint system to remove public officials from office and corroborate the truthfulness of candidates' declarations about their background, education and judicial antecedents.

Third, the *Contraloría General de la República* (Office of the Comptroller General), or the country's independent Supreme Audit Institution, oversees public spending, conducts audits of other government agencies, and can sanction for misconduct as well as send cases for formal prosecution. Like the Ombudsmen, the *Contraloría* receives and investigations citizen complaints about spending irregularities, and conducts education campaigns to publicize the complaints system. From 2008 to 2014, the *Contraloría* received 7453 complaints against municipalities, equaling 55% of the total complaints received during that period.[4] Evidence from a field experiment suggests being monitored by the *Contraloría* (albeit in conjunction with a recognized anti-corruption NGO) in small-scale infrastructure projects led municipal governments to spend less per project, a downstream indicator of reduced corruption by eliminating cost inflation (Lagunes 2018).

Finally, in addition to the *Contraloría*, a group of other agencies is tasked specifically with fighting corruption. The Public Prosecutor's Office (*Fiscalía*) has a set of Specialized Prosecutors for Crimes of Corruption of Public Officials and accepts direct complaints from

[4] Statistics downloaded 25 June 2015, http://www.contraloria.gob.pe/.

citizens. The Anti-Corruption Prosecutor of the Attorney General (*Procuradaría Pública Especializada en Delitos de Corrupción*) focuses on securing monetary reparations in corruption cases and also manages a citizen complaint system.

2.2 Corruption and Increasing Malfeasance in a Second Term

Corruption is quite a salient political issue in Peru. In the 2017 LAPOP survey of Latin American countries, 77% of Peruvians said more than half of all politicians are corrupt, the 3rd highest rate across the region (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017). This perception seems to come from direct experience, as Peru scored 5th out of 27 countries in the percentage of respondents experiencing corruption (29.6%). Peruvians are generally intolerant of corruption, with only 17.6% of respondents reporting that paying a bribe was justified, slightly lower than the Latin American regional average of 20.5% (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017). Evidence also suggests corruption is seen as an urgent problem needing to be resolved. In the original survey presented here, respondents were asked how big of a problem corruption is in the management of the municipal government compared to other problems; 65% said it was the biggest problem, and 86.3% said it was either a big or the biggest problem.

Peruvians also have pessimistic views of their politicians overall. In a 2011 survey from Peru's National Institute for Statistics and Information,[5] respondents were asked about their opinion of politicians in general. Only 4.6% of the entire sample of almost 25,000 respondents reported believing that politicians cared about the population.

Peru's reliance on extractive industries and the political effects of the resource curse at the subnational level also likely influence voters' perceptions of corruption and their negative assessment of politicians. Thanks to the commodity boom of the mid-2000s, the resources transferred to Peru's local governments rose 13-fold from 2004 to 2007 (Arellano-Yanguas 2011). Dissatisfaction due to inefficient spending of the windfall and conflict with local

[5] The most recent year the question was asked was 2011. ENAHO Yearly Household Survey from Peru's *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática* (INEI), https://www.inei.gob.pe/

authorities over spending has been high (Arellano-Yanguas 2011; Ponce and McClintock 2014). The possibility of controlling these newly expanded local budgets may be drawing increasingly corrupt and lower quality candidates to seek office (Brollo et al. 2013).

Finally, evidence strongly suggests Peruvians view the opportunity to be corrupt as greater for second-term mayors than for newly elected challengers. In the original survey reported here, respondents were asked if mayors that performed well in the first term would continue to perform well in the second if re-elected. Only 40% said good performance was 'likely' or 'very likely' to be repeated. Those who answered 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely' were then asked 'why'.[6] More than half (53.4%) attributed good performance not being repeated to the fact that re-elected mayors are more likely to be corrupt because they learn how to do so effectively in their first period. Almost a quarter (23.5%) reported that there is not sufficient oversight to ensure re-elected mayors will do a good job in a second term.

In Congressional debates over the 2015 law prohibiting re-election, lawmakers' justifications for the ban also suggest an assumption of increasing malfeasance across terms.[7] Every congressperson referenced that the law's aim was to curb corruption. Though the ban was first put forward in 2011, speakers asserted that the reason the bill was finally being debated was the huge corruption scandals involving regional presidents, with the implicated politicians mentioned by name. Mayors were described as dishonest and corrupt, lacking capacity and a vocation to help their community, and only seeking re-election to continue robbing state coffers. Strong performing mayors were the exception to the rule.

Legislators also referenced the idea that "power corrupts": mayors may enter politics with good intentions but they quickly see the possibilities for malfeasance and decide they want to remain in office. Lawmakers worried about local politicians who wanted to be mayors for life, and argued that re-election creates clientelism as it induces incumbents to buy-off support for their re-election bid. Many suggested Peru's corruption stemmed

[6] The question was open ended and enumerators were trained to classify answers into predefined categories.

[7] I read each of the transcripts of the four debates held from June to October 2014. A fifth debate, held May 3, 2015, is not available online, and repeated requests to receive it have gone unanswered.

from lack of institutional controls, and that with proper oversight, re-election would not necessarily generate corruption. However, given Peru's generally weak accountability system, prohibiting re-election was seen as a necessary tool to curb corruption.

3 The Incumbency Disadvantage in Mayoral Politics

To begin, I show that not only are mayors unable to marshal the benefits of office to their advantage, office-holding actually harms their future electoral success (Prediction 1). Following the incumbency advantage literature (Lee 2008), I use a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to estimate the causal effect of incumbency on future electoral outcomes. A simple comparison of incumbents' and challengers' subsequent voteshare is problematic because whatever drove their win in the first place would influence their likelihood of winning in the future. Instead, I compare the electoral success in time t of incumbents who barely won in time *t-1* with the candidates that ran and barely lost. Assuming the win at time *t-1* is as-if random allows for causal identification of the effect of incumbency on electoral success in the next election.

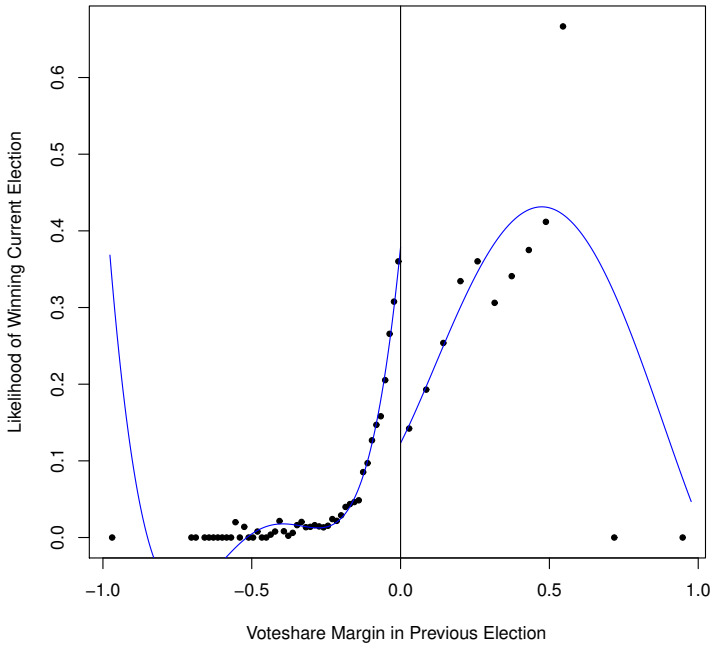
I use data from Peru's National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* - JNE) for the local elections held in 2006, 2010 and 2014.[8,9] The first local election after the post-Fujimori democratization process took place in 2002, so the 2006 election is the first in which incumbent mayors could have run in the post-2000 era. For each election year (2006, 2010 and 2014), I construct a dataset of the electoral outcomes in that election year for all candidates who ran for mayor in the previous election year (2002, 2006 and 2010 respectively). Following Calonico et al. (2017), the ideal bandwidth from this aggregated dataset is 9.7 percentage points, so the RDD analysis is run only on a smaller dataset of candidates who won or lost within this margin in the previous election. This yields 8948 observations, each of which is a candidate-election year.

[8] See Aragón & Pique (2019) for additional effects of incumbency using the same data and an RDD design.

[9] Though the raw data is available publicly, I am greateful to José Incio for sharing a cleaned dataset of all mayors who ran for and won re-election for the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections.

I find a significant incumbency disadvantage: candidates who barely won the previous election (incumbents) are 24 percentage points less likely to win the subsequent election (their re-election) compared to candidates who barely lost (challengers). Figure 1 visually depicts the results. Incumbents, those to the right of 0 in voteshare margin in the previous election, have a lower probability of winning than the challengers they originally barely beat.

Figure 1: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006-2014



Additional figures in Appendix A show the results of a series of standard robustness checks. Appendix Figure A.1 plots the estimates for a series of bandwidths, showing that the negative and significant effect is robust to bandwidth choice. Appendix Figure A.2 plots results of a McCrary (2008) density test confirming no manipulation in the running variable around the cutpoint (p-value 0.96). Appendix Figures A.3, A.4 and A.5 plot the results of separate RDD estimates per election (2006, 2010 and 2014), confirming that the incumbency disadvantage is not driven by recent legislative efforts to ban mayoral re-election, but rather has persisted back in time long before eliminating re-election became politically salient.

Appendix Section A.1 describes an alternative estimation using randomization inference following Cattaneo, Frandsen, and Titiunik (2015).

Recent critiques of the methodology (Eggers 2017; De Magalhaes 2015; De Magalhães and Hirvonen 2019) highlight how differential selection into running between incumbents and challengers may bias RDD results. I first test for differential re-running by conducting an RDD with the decision to run as the outcome variable. As Appendix Figure A.7 shows, candidates who barely won (incumbents) are less likely to run in the subsequent election than candidates who barely lost. Given that the effect increases over time,[10] this is neither surprising nor inconsistent with the existence of an incumbency disadvantage in the sense that incumbents are increasingly cognizant of their electoral handicap and decide not to run.

However, though there is differential re-running, I demonstrate that it is not the main mechanism driving the results in Figure 1. I run the RDD analysis on a sub-set of the data that only includes candidates in races in which the incumbent decided to re-run, and as Appendix Figure A.6 shows, the results are robust to this sample restriction. Admittedly, the effect size is less pronounced (-.13) than in the full sample (-.24). That said, the fact that the effect is still negative and significant (p-value $<.001$) suggests that even when incumbents choose to re-run, they are systematically less likely to win than the challengers they barely beat. In other words, the bias against incumbents depicted in Figure 1 is not merely a product of voters choosing challengers because the incumbent is not on the ballot.

Furthermore, Figure 1 results are, following best practice, conducted unconditional on running, meaning that if a candidate decided not to run, they were coded as having lost by having won 0% of votes. This should be considered as the lower bound on an incumbency disadvantage, in the sense that every candidate who opted out of running necessarily loses. The upper bound is the one in which all candidates who choose not to run are simply removed from the dataset, which is the analysis shown in Appendix Figure A.6. The "true" estimate, though impossible to recover, is the one in which all candidates who barely win or lose decide

[10] The effect sizes are -0.099 in 2006, -0.194 in 2010 and -0.251 in 2014, all significant at the 5% level or less.

to re-run, and falls somewhere between these two bounds. Since both bounds are negative and significant, it lends credibility to the finding of an incumbency disadvantage.

4 Preferring Challengers Despite Good Performance

The RDD results provide compelling evidence that incumbents are disadvantaged compared to challengers. To provide an alternative test of anti-incumbent bias and to study the reasons why it exists, I use a conjoint experiment[11] to identify which candidate characteristics impact voter behavior in re-elections.[12] The conjoint allows for exploring the micro-foundations of the aggregate-level electoral returns results. In particular, by explicitly informing respondents about incumbent performance, it allows me to discount both the possibility that the incumbency disadvantage is merely due to poor incumbent performance, and the key alternative explanation in the electoral accountability literature, that voters lack accurate performance information with which to judge incumbents. Choosing between two candidates that vary on multiple dimensions also better reflects real-life voting and reduces the risk of social desirability bias, such as for choosing candidates with a history of poor performance in office or that engage in campaign gift-giving.

I embedded the conjoint experiment in an original household survey fielded among 1061 respondents in 18 urban, peri-urban and rural municipalities in the region of Cusco, located in the Peruvian Andes (Appendix E provides additional details about the survey and sampling). The surveys were implemented in-person using tablets. The conjoint questions were placed at the beginning of the survey to avoid priming effects. Candidate profiles were randomized at the level of the individual respondent. For each question item, two candidate profiles were randomly generated, each of which contained one of the possible values of each of the characteristics. Respondents saw the two candidate profiles side-by-side and

[11] The method in its current use was developed largely by Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014). Carlson (2015) offers one of the first political science applications, particularly that studies how preferences for good performance versus other candidate characteristics influence vote choice in re-elections.

[12] Pre-Analysis Plan filed prior to launching the survey: `http://egap.org/registration/2762`.

were then asked: "Which of the following two candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?" The process was repeated four times, so the respondent saw four pairs of candidates, and was asked the same question immediately after viewing each pair. Appendix Figure B.1 shows how the profiles appeared to respondents on the tablet.

I tested eight candidate attributes: incumbency; gender; links with social organizations; being from the respondents' village; personal wealth; indigenous first language; political dynasty; and campaign gift giving.[13] Appendix Table C.1 shows the values each attribute could take and Appendix Table D.1 presents the Spanish language used in the survey. In each pair of profiles, one candidate was always the incumbent and the other was always the challenger. The incumbent could take on one of five performance-related conditions: no performance information; good (bad) performance in public works projects; and good (bad) performance in offering individuals emergency financial assistance.

Electoral accountability research tends to assume a priori knowledge of the type of performance that influences voter decision-making. Instead, I use a later survey question to directly test the assumption that voters value the two performance metrics I use. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of six different potential mayoral responsibilities. For financial assistance, 80.3% of respondents described providing this kind of aid as a very important or important responsibility of mayors.[14] For public works projects, 95.6% described it as very important or important.

The main outcome of interest is the respondents' choice between two candidates when prompted by the question, "Which of the following two candidates for mayor would you vote for?" The outcome variable corresponding to each candidate is whether the candidate was chosen by the respondent. The dataset includes 7576 unique candidate profiles.

[13] As the focus of this paper is incumbency, the other seven characteristics can be thought of as controls that allow for better identifying the impact of incumbency on vote choice.

[14] Qualitative interviews conducted in three regions of Peru prior to fielding the survey suggested this kind of financial help was common.

4.1 Results

Figure 2 depicts the main results. The points on the plot show the point estimates of the effect of each candidate attribute on the probability of the candidate being selected.[15] The interpretation of the estimate is the change in the probability that a profile will be selected when the trait is at the given level as compared to the baseline level. The plot depicts each trait's baseline level as a line with no point estimate. The lines on each point represent 95% confidence intervals, and the dashed vertical line shows zero. Appendix Table F.3 presents point estimates and p-values for each trait.

The most noteworthy result is how respondents perceive incumbents. For the incumbency conditions, each point estimate represents the effect of that particular condition compared to being a challenger (which was set as the baseline condition). For example, the effect of the candidate being an incumbent with no performance information compared to being a challenger is that it reduces the likelihood of being selected by .16.

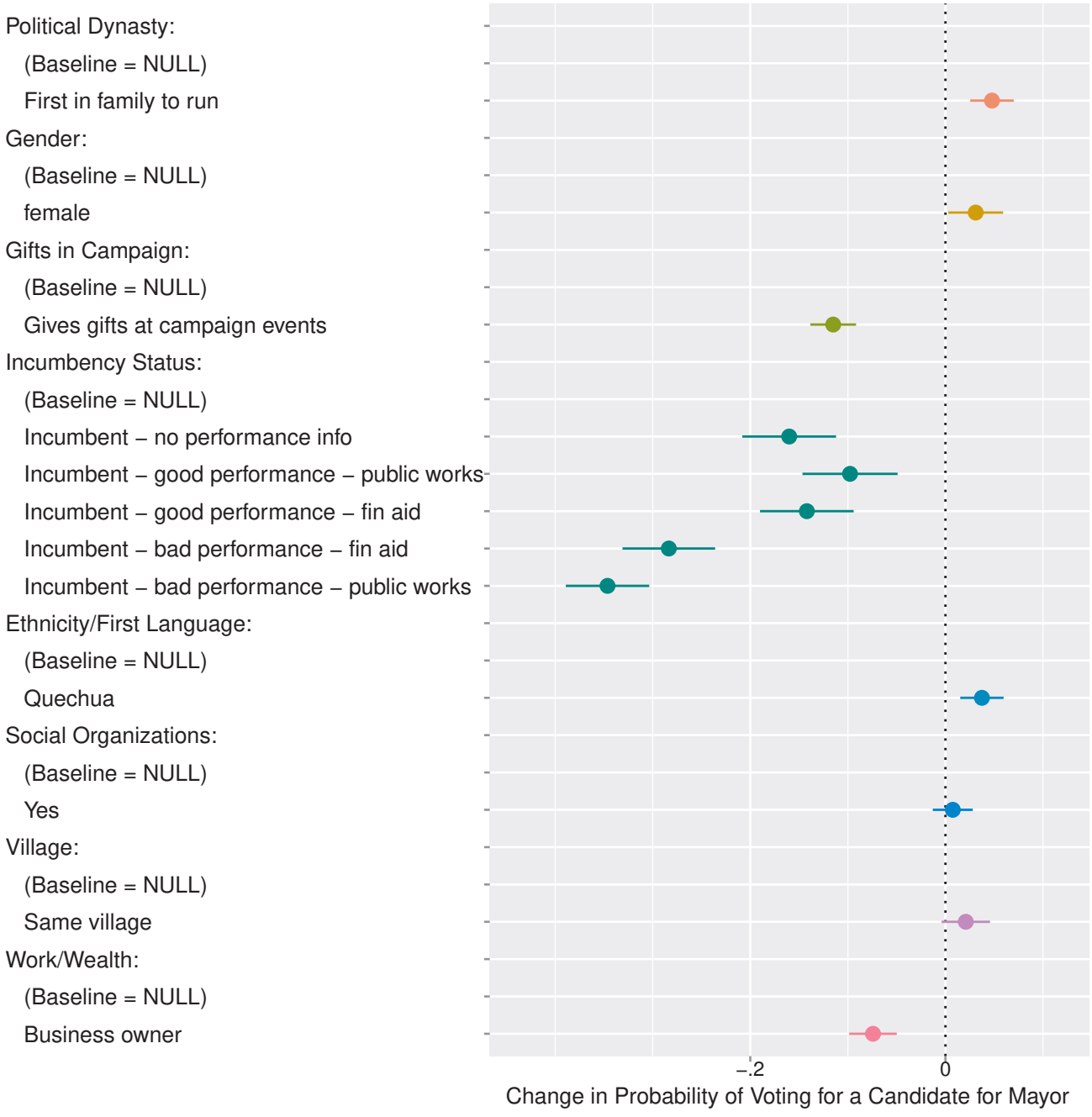
If electoral accountability was working as assumed, respondents would need to both punish poorly performing incumbents *and* reward high-performing incumbents.[16] Instead, the fact that all of the incumbency conditions have negative and significant effects suggests that regardless of the incumbent's performance, challengers are preferred. Most significantly, and in support of Prediction 2a, challengers are preferred even to incumbents that did a *good* job as mayor, and this holds for both of the performance measures.

Furthermore, respondents give greater weight to incumbency status than to the other candidate characteristics, as all of the incumbency traits—with the exception of good public works performance compared to giving gifts—have point estimates that are greater in absolute value than any other trait. In other words, not only do voters prefer challengers on average and prefer them even over high-performing incumbents, incumbency status is the

[15] Following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014), the quantity is the average marginal component effect (AMCE), which averages the effect sizes of that candidate trait across the values of all other candidate traits.

[16] This is the expectation recorded in the Pre-Analysis Plan registered prior to the survey being fielded.

Figure 2: Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Probability of Receiving Respondents' Vote



The dependent variable is whether the candidate profile was selected over the other candidate profile seen in the pair, after being prompted by the question "Which of these candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?". Clustered standard errors are calculated at the level of the individual to account for correlation between the same individual's candidate choices. Bars show 95% confidence intervals. Baseline values have no point estimates or confidence intervals.

most important determinant of vote choice.

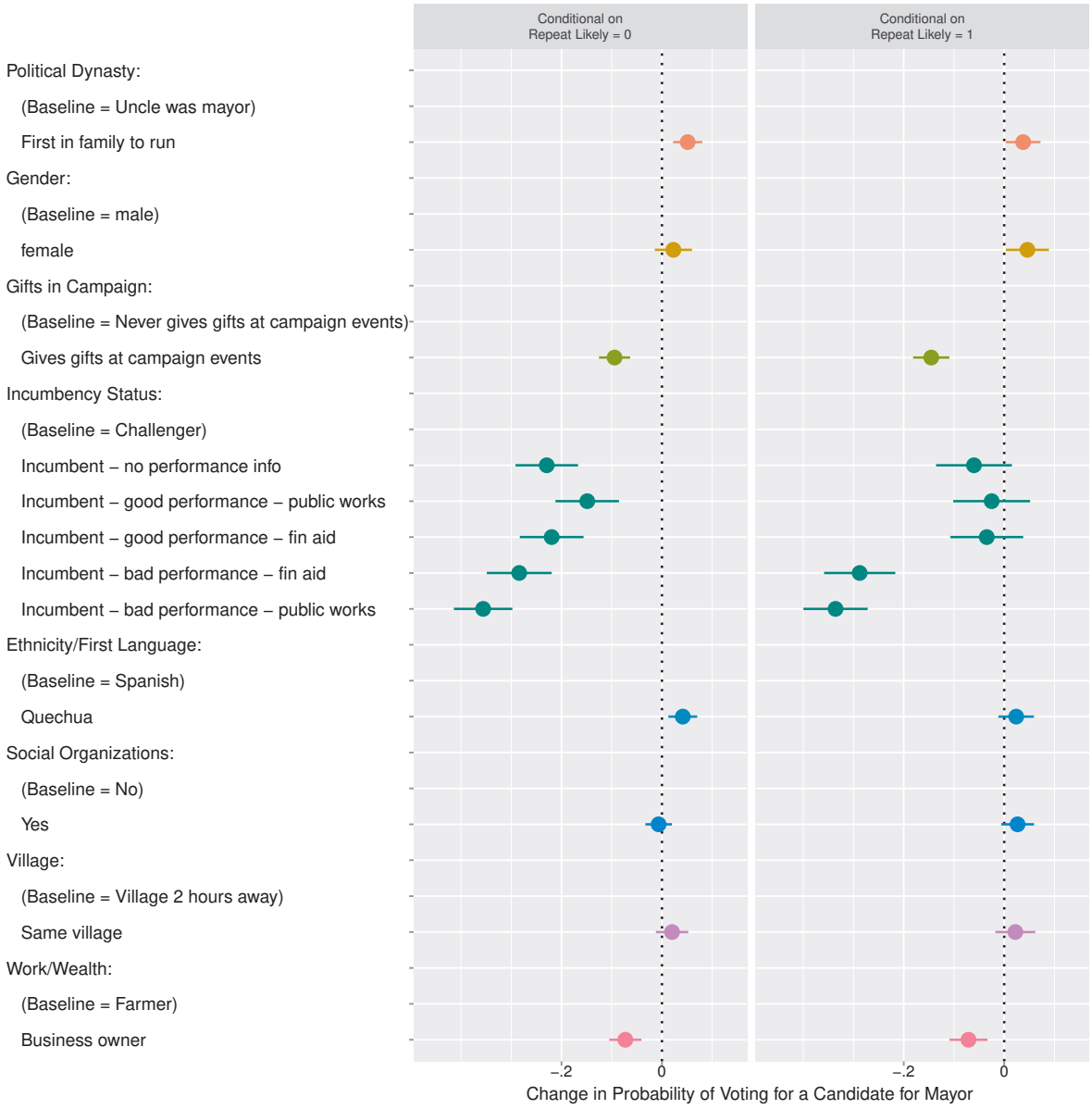
The results are robust to a series of checks standard for conjoint experiments, as described in Appendix G. To discount carryover effects, Appendix Figure G.1 shows the estimates are robust across the four different choice tasks, meaning responses are the same regardless of whether it was the first or subsequent pair of candidate profiles seen. To reject profile order effects, Appendix Figure G.2 shows the stability of estimates regardless of whether the candidate with that trait was the first or second in the pair. Finally, I confirm that the randomization across candidate traits (Appendix Table G.1) and across respondent characteristics (Appendix Table G.2) were both successful.

Before turning to the mechanisms, it is worth emphasizing how the conjoint and RDD results measure different, though complementary, aspects of the incumbency disadvantage. The RDD design compares incumbents to challengers who ran in the previous election but lost, whereas the conjoint experiment does not specify whether the challenger has run before, and therefore may include any type of challenger, either a career politician in her third election or a political novice. Thus the different empirical strategies are likely studying incumbency effects relative to different challenger types. Taken together, the two sets of results suggest that incumbents are disadvantaged regardless of the type of challenger they face, career politicians or rookies alike.

4.2 Mechanisms

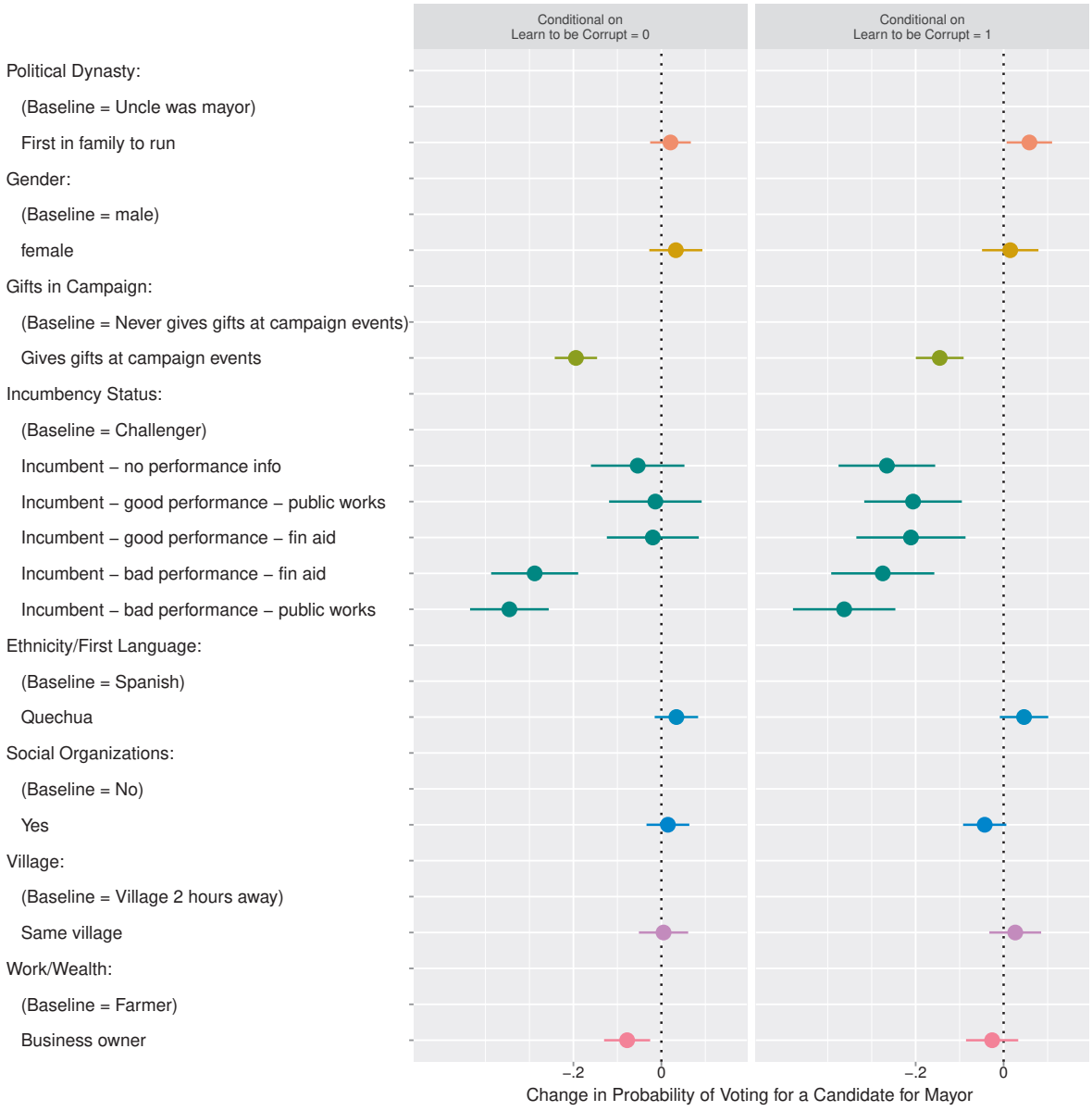
I argue that the electoral connection can break down if voters doubt that good performing incumbents will repeat their performance if given a second chance in office. To test this mechanism (Prediction 2b), I use a later survey question to assess whether beliefs about repeat performance are driving the bias against high-performing incumbents. Respondents were asked to rate the likelihood that an incumbent who performed well in her first term would repeat her performance if re-elected. Figure 3 shows the conjoint results dividing the sample by beliefs about repeat performance. In support of Prediction 2b, good performance

Figure 3: Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents' Reported Likelihood that Good Performance Will Be Repeated



The left panel shows the analysis conducted only on the sub-sample of respondents who believe that good incumbent performance being repeated if re-elected is 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely', while the right panel shows the analysis for respondents who believe it is 'likely' or 'very likely'. The dependent variable is whether the candidate profile was selected over the other candidate profile seen in the pair, after being prompted by the question "Which of these candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?". Clustered standard errors are calculated at the level of the individual to account for correlation between the same individual's candidate choices. Bars show 95% confidence intervals. Baseline values have no point estimates or confidence intervals.

Figure 4: Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents' Reported Beliefs That Incumbents Learn to Be Corrupt In Office



The right panel shows the analysis conducted only on the sub-sample of respondents who reported that incumbents learn to be corrupt in office as a justification for their belief that good incumbent performance being repeated if re-elected is 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely'. The dependent variable is whether the candidate profile was selected over the other candidate profile seen in the pair, after being prompted by the question "Which of these candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?". Clustered standard errors are calculated at the level of the individual to account for correlation between the same individual's candidate choices. Bars show 95% confidence intervals. Baseline values have no point estimates or confidence intervals.

is only punished among those who believe that it is unlikely to be repeated (left panel). Those who perceive a high probability of good performance being repeated (right panel) are indifferent between challengers and high performers; while they are not rewarding good performance, they are not punishing it either. This suggests that while all respondents have some anti-incumbent bias, those who doubt good performance will be repeated are driving the results in which strong performers are punished.

I also directly test the mechanism of voters' belief in incumbents' increasing corruption across terms (Prediction 2c). Recall that survey respondents who reported that it was 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely' that good first-term performance would be repeated were then asked to explain their rationale in a follow-up question. More than half (53.4%) reported their belief that incumbents learn to be corrupt in office. Again, I split the sample accordingly and re-ran the conjoint analysis. Figure 4 depicts the results. In support of Prediction 2c, those who report that incumbents learn how to be corrupt in office (right panel) are driving the effect of punishing good performers.

5 Mediating the Incumbency Bias

The conjoint experiment's results support the theory's testable implication that voters prefer challengers even over high-performing incumbents (Prediction 2a) and reject the alternative hypothesis that incumbents are disadvantaged because voters lack access to accurate performance information. As an additional test of these and other alternative explanations, I alter the RDD set-up, using a heterogeneous treatment effects design to test for what "types" of incumbents are able to overcome voters' anti-incumbent bias. In other words, I ask whether certain characteristics of incumbents—either of the districts in which they run, their performance or their individual personal traits—attenuate the incumbency disadvantage.

I combine the RDD dataset with data on voter trust in politicians and accountability institutions, measures of incumbent performance, candidate characteristics, and variables

capturing the socioeconomic, political and institutional context at the district level. I perform the following local linear regression, including the triple interaction between the treatment variable (incumbent), forcing variable (voteshare margin in the previous election) and relevant covariate (X), as well as all lower order interactions:

$$y_d = \alpha + \beta_1 incumbent_d + \beta_2 forcing_d + \beta_3 X + \beta_4 incumbent_d \cdot forcing_d + \beta_5 incumbent_d \cdot X + \beta_6 forcing_d \cdot X + \beta_7 incumbent_d \cdot forcing_d \cdot X + \epsilon_d$$

The coefficient of interest is β_5, the coefficient for the interaction term between incumbency and the relevant covariate. If significant, it would suggest heterogeneity in the incumbency effect in terms of that covariate. For example, if the coefficient on the interaction term 'Incumbent X Performance' was significant and positive, it would suggest that while incumbents are disadvantaged on average, those who perform well enjoy a higher probability of getting re-elected than those who perform poorly. All of the interacted covariates have been standardized (mean of zero and standard deviation of 1) to facilitate comparison.

5.1 Does Performance or Information Explain Incumbency Bias?

I begin by using the RDD set-up to provide a further test of the conjoint results, namely that challengers are preferred to even good performers (Prediction 2a), and that the alternative hypothesis—that voters reject incumbents because they lack accurate information about their performance—does not hold. In both cases, results support the conjoint experiment's findings. This section briefly describes these tests, with full details available in Appendix H.

I use four measures of performance to test whether incumbents enjoy an electoral benefit from performing well in office. First, I include whether Peru's conditional cash transfer program (JUNTOS) was added during the mayor's term. Second, I test for performance in terms of execution of the budget for public works projects. Third, I include the change in the district-level Human Development Index (HDI) over the mayor's term. Finally, I use survey

data on how respondents evaluate the mayor's management of municipal governance, available for 2014 from a national household survey (ENAHO - *Encuesta Nacional de Hogares*) conducted by Peru's National Institute for Statistics and Information.

Table 1 depicts the results. The four performance measures are not significant, providing additional support for Prediction 2a, that voters prefer challengers even over incumbents who performed well in terms of these metrics. Of course, this relationship holds only for these particular performance measures, and it could be the case that voters do reward for other aspects of performance. Still, the results broadly support the voter preferences expressed in the conjoint experiment, and thus provide a real-world test of the conjoint's validity.

Table 1: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Incumbent Performance

	DV: Candidate Won Election			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Incumbent	−0.278***	−0.288***	−0.248***	−0.357***
	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.049)
Voteshare Margin Previous	3.113***	2.984***	2.898***	3.380***
	(0.235)	(0.261)	(0.196)	(0.576)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	−2.591***	−2.448***	−2.196***	−2.593***
	(0.313)	(0.337)	(0.270)	(0.655)
Incumbent X CCT Added	−0.033			
	(0.021)			
Incumbent X Public Works Budget Spent		−0.018		
		(0.025)		
Incumbent X Change HDI			−0.022	
			(0.020)	
Incumbent X Rate Municipal Performance				0.026
				(0.052)
Constant	0.386***	0.407***	0.371***	0.462***
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.035)
Observations	6422	5548	8915	1371

Note: p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. District-level clustered standard errors reported. Non-interactions and triple interactions 'Incumbent X Margin Previous X Variable' estimated but not reported.

Next, to rule out the alternative hypothesis that voters would re-elect incumbents if they had access to accurate performance information, I use district-level data from the 2007 census, creating an average across three measures of owning information-related technology (cell phones, television and internet). I also include two ENAHO survey questions, asking

how often respondents inform themselves about politics and how much interest they have in politics. As Table 2 shows, none of the variables associated with greater access to information is significant, suggesting that an information constraint—not knowing how the incumbent performed—does not explain why voters prefer challengers. Given respondents had perfect information in the conjoint and still on average preferred challengers, these results again provide strong support for the validity of the conjoint experiment's findings.

Table 2: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Political Information

	DV: Candidate Won Election		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incumbent	−0.247***	−0.266***	−0.265***
	(0.019)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Voteshare Margin Previous	2.907***	2.865***	2.873***
	(0.196)	(0.309)	(0.308)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	−2.262***	−1.780***	−1.810***
	(0.264)	(0.420)	(0.419)
Incumbent X Communication Technology Index	0.019		
	(0.020)		
Incumbent X Politically Informed		0.034	
		(0.030)	
Incumbent X Political Interest			−0.011
			(0.027)
Constant	0.372***	0.378***	0.379***
	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Observations	8904	3892	3894

Note: p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. District-level clustered standard errors reported. Non-interactions and triple interactions 'Incumbent X Margin Previous X Variable' estimated but not reported.

5.2 The Role of Horizontal Accountability Institutions

To review, I argue that for electoral accountability to work in practice, voters have to be confident incumbents will continue to perform well in office if given another chance. If voters perceive increasing corruption in a second term, then information about good current performance becomes meaningless for inferring future behavior. In such contexts, before they re-elect, voters need an extra assurance that incumbents will be constrained despite

their increased ability to engage in corruption, and this assurance can come through belief in the effectiveness of horizontal accountability institutions.

To test whether voters' trust in oversight institutions impacts their willingness to reward incumbents (Prediction 3), I use responses from the ENAHO survey described earlier for a series of questions about trust in different government agencies and social institutions.[17] The survey is implemented on a monthly basis, so I include responses from January-October for 2006 and January-September for 2010 and 2014 (the mayoral election was held in November in 2006 and October in 2010 and 2014). I use only the most immediate time frame prior to the election because I hypothesize that this period would be the most likely to influence voter behavior; earlier lack of trust may already be resolved or have been forgotten by the time the election comes around.

I create a district-level measure of trust in oversight institutions by averaging responses to the trust question for all of the horizontal accountability institutions that are included in the ENAHO survey. In 2006, 2010 and 2014, the institutions are the National Elections Board; judicial branch; Ombudsmen; and Municipal Government. The 2014 survey also asks about trust in four government agencies designed to fight corruption, so I include an average of these responses as well. The institutions are the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor of the Attorney General; Office of the Comptroller General; Public Prosecutor's Office; and the High-level Anti-Corruption Commission.

The results, presented in Column 1 of Table 3, provide strong support for Prediction 3, that when voters report more trust in horizontal accountability institutions, they are more likely to vote for incumbents. The trust measures go from lower to higher trust, so a positive coefficient can be interpreted as higher levels of trust being correlated with a greater likelihood of the incumbent being re-elected. The positive and significant coefficient on the interaction between incumbency and trust in oversight institutions suggests that

[17] The question reads 'Currently, do you trust institutions such as ...', listing the institution then giving five options: none; a little; sufficient; a lot; I don't know. The latter answer I coded as missing. The questions are asked identically across years.

Table 3: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Voter Trust in Institutions

	DV: Candidate Won Election		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incumbent	−0.276***	−0.283***	−0.283***
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Voteshare Margin Previous	3.129***	3.126***	3.125***
	(0.305)	(0.297)	(0.297)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	−2.211***	−2.057***	−2.062***
	(0.410)	(0.399)	(0.400)
Incumbent X Trust Horiz. Accountability Institutions	0.074**		
	(0.030)		
Incumbent X Trust Other Politicians		0.011	
		(0.028)	
Incumbent X Trust Police Army			0.027
			(0.029)
Constant	0.390***	0.393***	0.393***
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Observations	3934	4139	4139

Note: p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. District-level clustered standard errors reported. Non-interactions and triple interactions 'Incumbent X Margin Previous X Variable' estimated but not reported.

incumbents who run in districts in which respondents reported higher levels of trust in horizontal accountability institutions receive an electoral boost relative to challengers.

I conduct a series of checks on the validity of the trust measure and the results. First, I test two measures of trust in institutions that are unrelated to accountability. One is trust in other politicians and levels of government, which is a district average of reported trust in the regional government, provincial government, Congress and political parties. The other is trust in the army and police. As Columns 2 and 3 of Table 3 show, neither of these measures is significant, suggesting that it is not the case that places with greater trust overall are more likely to re-elect; rather, it is only trust in the specific institutions of oversight that matters for incumbent re-election.

Second, it is also not the case that higher trust in horizontal accountability institutions is merely a proxy for perceptions of better mayoral performance. The trust in oversight institutions variable is not correlated with any of the four performance measures.[18] In addition,

[18] The correlations are, respectively: Average spending of public works budget (.078); CCT added to district

recall that respondents were specifically asked about their satisfaction with the municipal government's public management, which unlike trust in municipal or other institutions, *is* a direct measure of the incumbent mayor's performance. However, as was shown in Column 4 of Table 1, this variable is insignificant, while trust in oversight institutions is significant and positive. This suggests both that the trust question is distinct from voters' assessment of performance, and that what impacts incumbents' electoral fortunes is not performance, but trust in oversight institutions.

5.3 Other Alternative Explanations

In addition to incumbent performance and access to information, I test for and reject a series of other alternative explanations for how incumbents overcome voter bias to improve their electoral prospects. I briefly describe the results here, with full details in Appendix H.

I begin with explanations related to municipal-level politics. First, since more competitive districts may be simply harder for incumbents to win, I include the effective number of parties from the previous election. Second, I use precinct-level returns to gauge whether incumbents can increase their re-election success either through enjoying wide support across villages or relying on securing high support in a small set of villages.[19] Third, Peruvian law allows voters to petition to put the standing mayor up for a recall, and incumbents may fare worse where recalls occur. Following Holland and Incio (2018), I include binary measures for whether a petition was made to begin gathering signatures and whether enough signatures were gathered to hold a recall in both the current and previous term. As Appendix Table H.1 shows, none of these variables are significant, suggesting they are not explanations for how incumbents increase their likelihood of re-election in the face of an incumbency disadvantage.

Finally, particular characteristics of the incumbent, say age or past experience, could also make it easier for certain incumbents to overcome voter bias. I test the seven character-

(.018); Change in HDI (.09); and rating of municipal performance in 2014 (.12).

[19] Thank you to José Incio who provided me with the effective number of parties measure and the precinct-level elections returns.

istics included in the information candidates must submit to the National Elections Board, available for the 2014 election. As Appendix Table H.2 shows, none of the characteristics is significant, suggesting the incumbency disadvantage is not mediated by particular traits of the incumbent herself.

6 Conclusion

In the broadest sense, this paper aimed to assess the conditions under which re-election succeeds in generating political accountability. It begins from the premise that, at a minimum, electoral accountability requires that voters are willing to re-elect high-performing incumbents, thereby incentivizing politicians' good behavior in office. However, using electoral returns data across three local elections, I find a strong incumbency *dis*-advantage, in contrast to the well-documented incumbency advantage found in most advanced democracies, suggesting significant voter disdain for incumbents. Furthermore, in a survey experiment, I find respondents are so biased against incumbents that they prefer the challenger even when informed the incumbent performed well.

I then present evidence in support of my theoretical argument for why. Using data from my original survey, I show how voters assume politicians are more corrupt in their subsequent terms, and as a result, they question whether good performance in one period is an accurate predictor of good performance in the next. I also document how these attitudes underpin respondents' preference for challengers, even over incumbents who performed well. I further argue that horizontal accountability institutions can ameliorate the electoral disconnection by constraining politicians' behavior in office, thereby providing an assurance of continued good performance if re-elected. Combining existing survey data with the elections results on the incumbency dis-advantage, I show that where horizontal accountability institutions are perceived to be strong, voters are more willing to re-elect incumbents.

These results have important implications for the study of political accountability and

democracy more broadly. They suggest that the traditional view of incumbency, particularly that incumbents will be incentivized to perform well because voters are willing to reward good performance at the ballot box, may not apply universally. The results also highlight the importance of understanding how different types of accountability operate not in isolation, but how they interact. In particular, it may be difficult to generate the vertical accountability of re-election when horizontal accountability is weak.

Furthermore, the results found in Peru may be expected to travel elsewhere. Weak states and poor incumbent performance can generate disdain for politicians (Mainwaring 2006), that when combined with widespread corruption, lays the groundwork for the view that even good performers can be corrupted in subsequent terms. Strong parties or clientelistic networks may maintain incumbent support despite these conditions, due to partisan or personalistic loyalty. But with neither parties nor clientelistic machines to deliver votes to incumbents, a perception of increasing malfeasance across terms can translate into an incumbency disadvantage that applies to good and bad performers alike.

Taking just the case of Latin America, a region rife with corruption, Guatemala, Ecuador and Panama join Peru in combining weak states, frail party systems and high corruption. These countries also have relatively low re-election rates compared to other countries in the region. In Peru, Panama and Ecuador, mayoral re-election runs between 22% and 33% (Mejia Acosta and Meneses 2019; Jiménez 2019). In Guatemala, incumbent re-election is the highest in the group at 41.2%, but RDD evidence suggests an incumbency disadvantage similar in magnitude to that of Peru (Morales Carrera 2014).

Overall, then, other developing democracies with similarly weak institutions, high corruption and frail party systems may fall into an electoral disconnection disequilibrium in which voters reject the very premise of re-election and ignore politicians' good performance when they make voting decisions. Over time, the absence of electoral incentives may result in low-quality candidates increasingly running and even worse performance in office reinforcing voters' initial inclination to throw them all out.

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Appendices

Appendix A RDD Robustness Checks

Figure A.1: RDD Estimates' Sensitivity to Bandwidth Choice

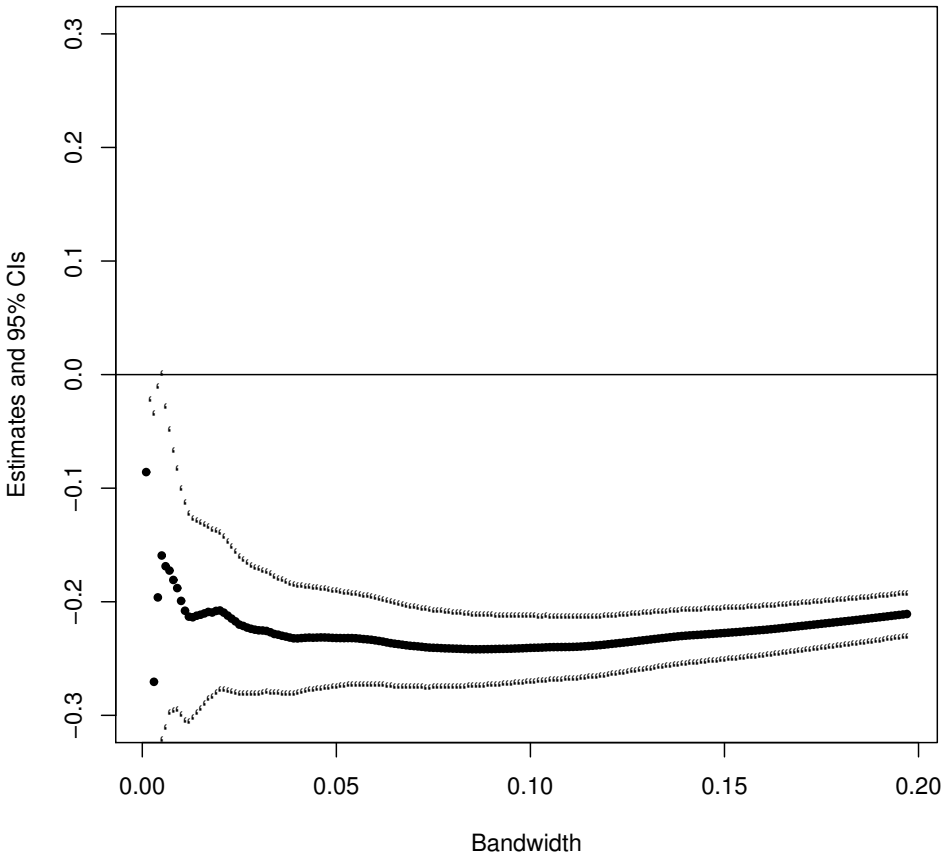
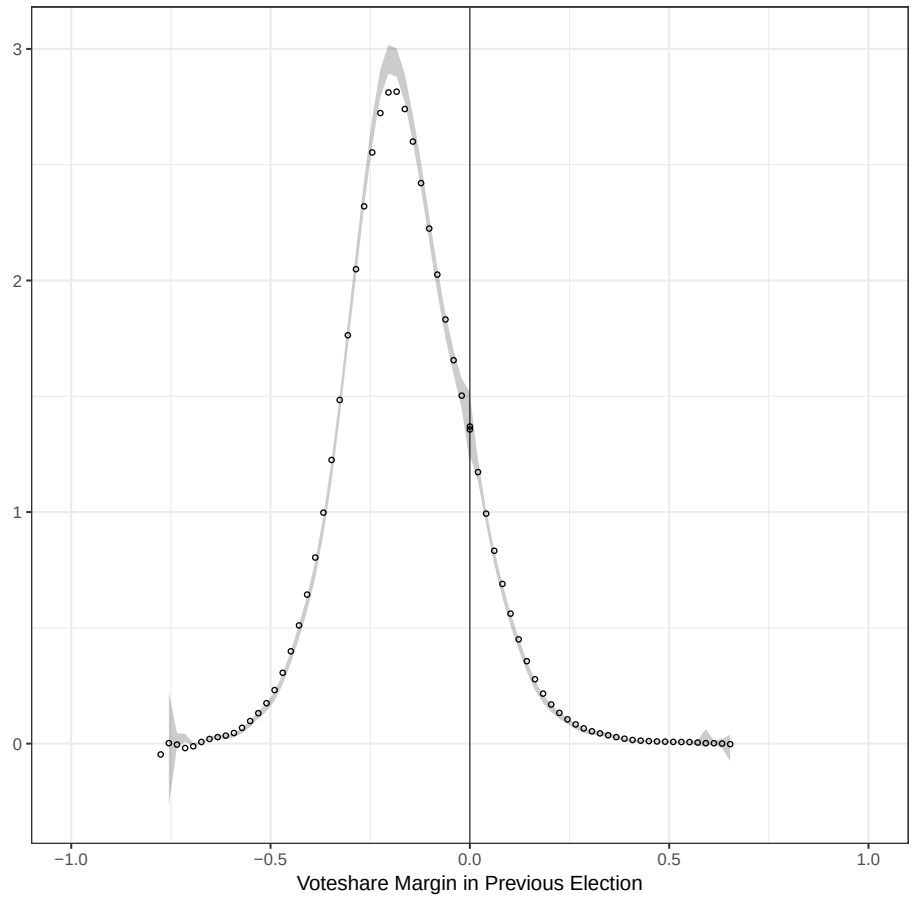


Figure A.2: McCrary Density Test



Plot of results of the McCrary (2008) density test of discontinuities confirming there is no manipulation in the running variable around the cutpoint. The discontinuity is 0.006 and the p-value is 0.96. Shaded regions depict 95% confidence intervals. Note that since many candidates run in each municipal election, there are more losers (observations with voteshare margin below zero) than there are winners (observations with voteshare margin above zero).

Figure A.3: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006

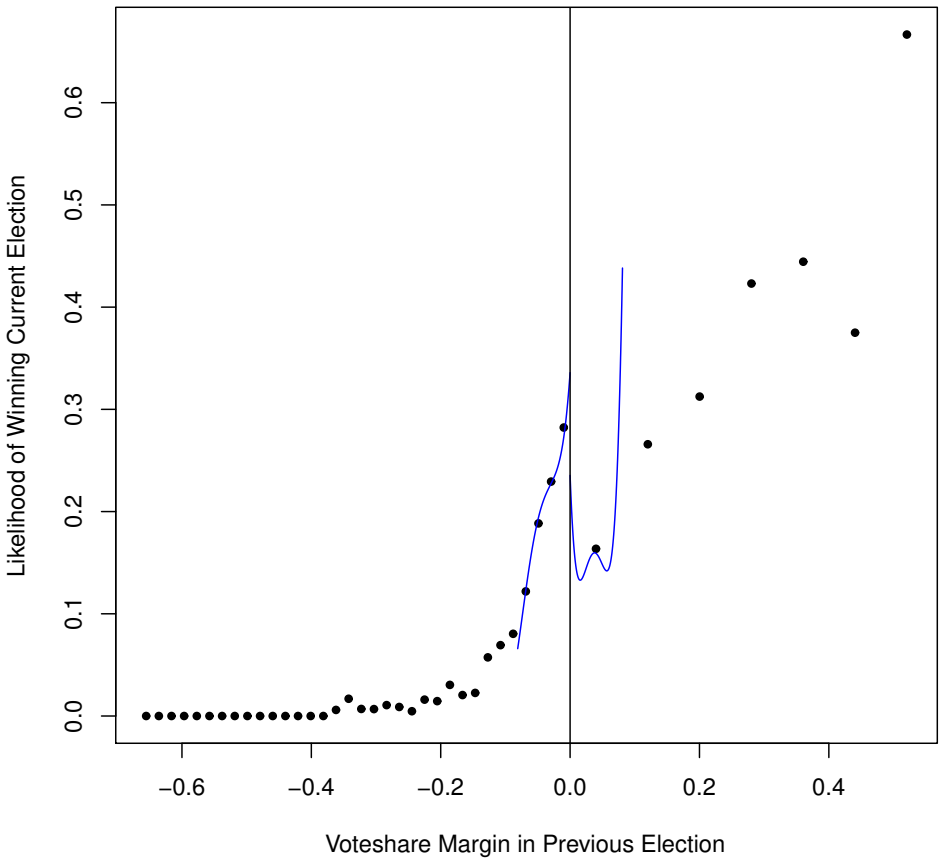


Figure A.4: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2010

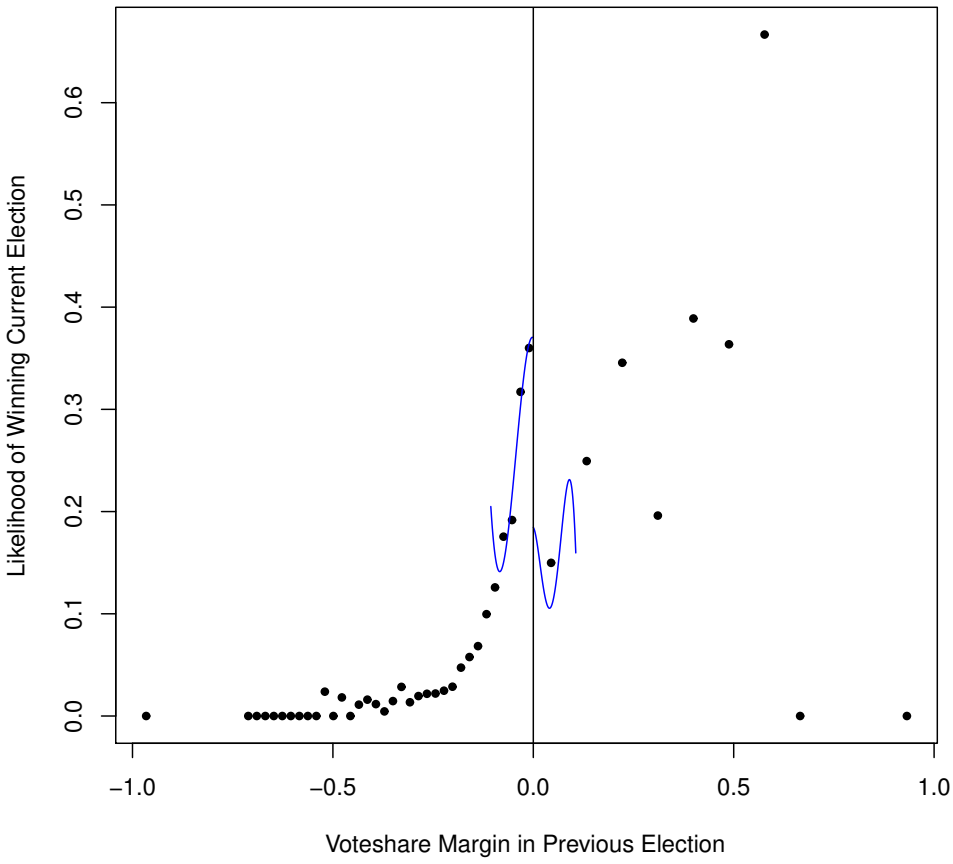


Figure A.5: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2014

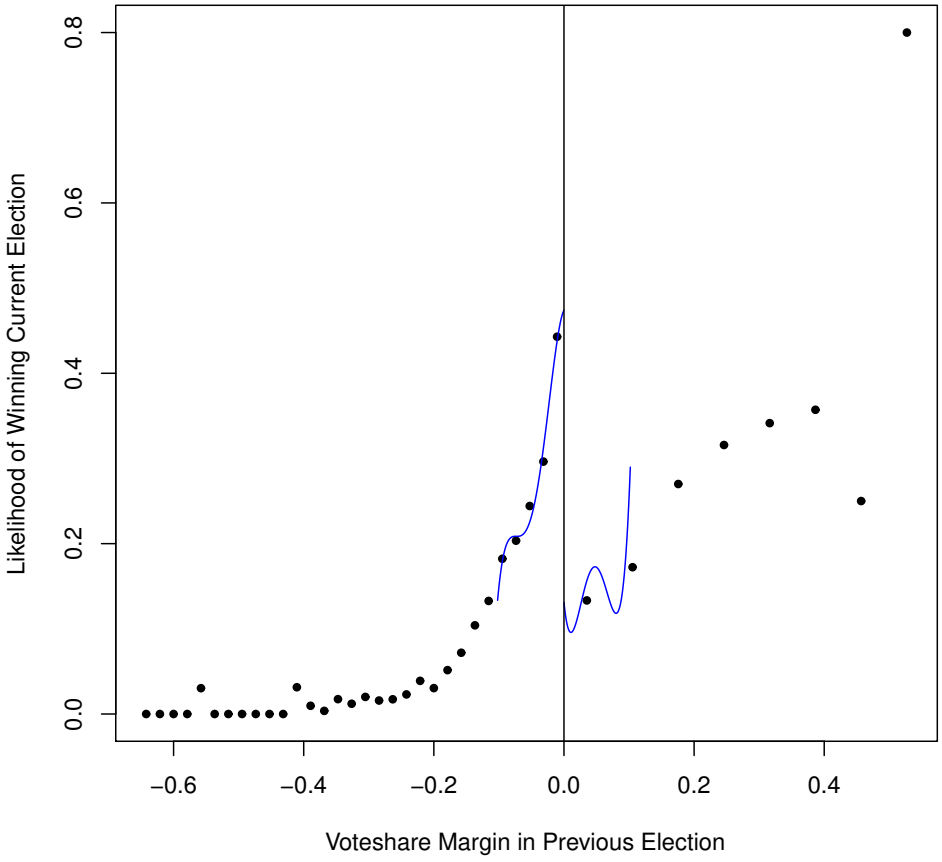
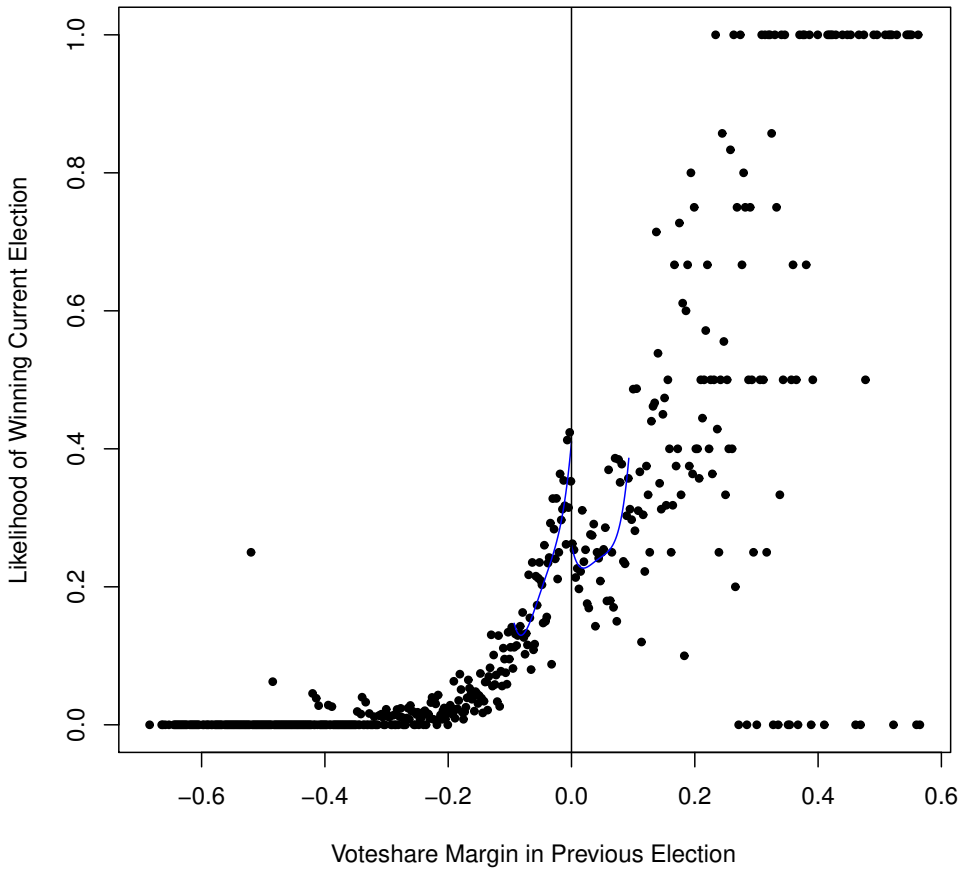
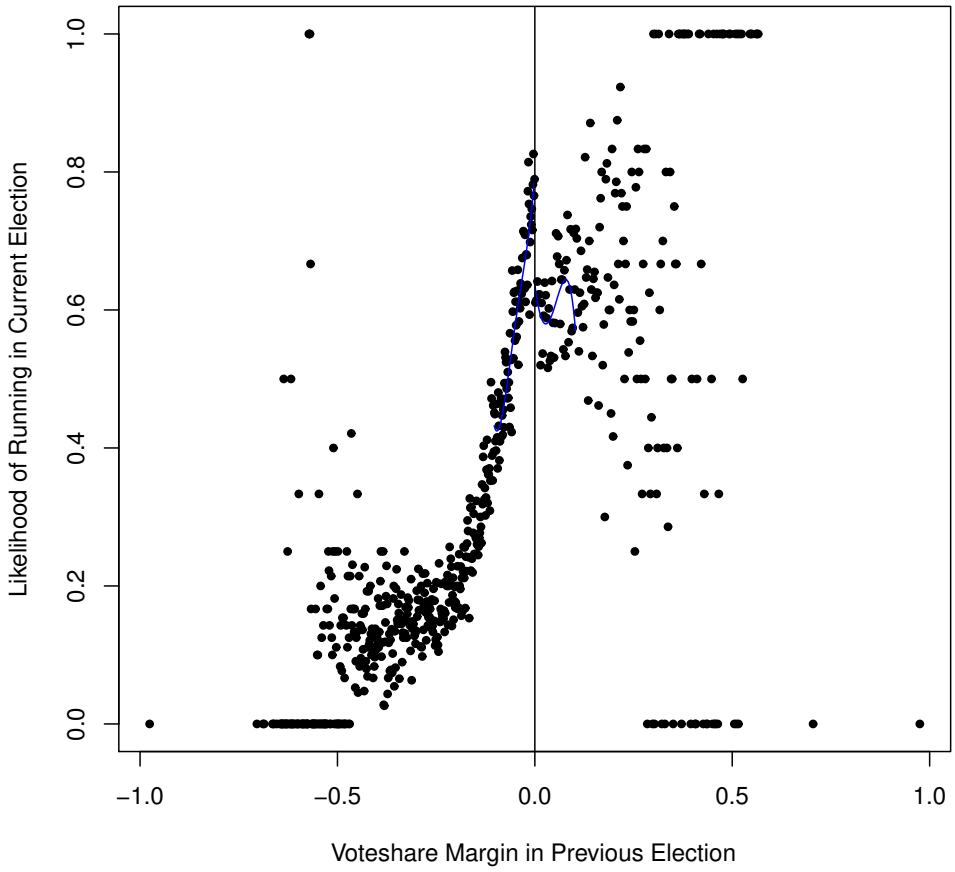


Figure A.6: Incumbency Disadvantage Conditional on Incumbent Re-Running, 2006-2014



The dataset only includes the races in which the incumbent decided to run in the subsequent election, which is 61.5% of all races. The bandwidth is 9.2pp (the ideal bandwidth following Calonico et al., 2017). The point estimate is -.127, p-value <.001, suggesting a negative and significant incumbency disadvantage even when only considering elections where incumbents chose to run again.

Figure A.7: Impact of Previous Voteshare on Decision to Run, 2006-2014



The outcome of interest is the decision to run in t+1 (instead of the traditional RDD outcome of whether the candidate won in t+1). The bandwidth is 10.3pp (the ideal bandwidth following Calonico et al., 2017). The point estimate is -0.179, p-value <.001.

A.1 Randomization Inference

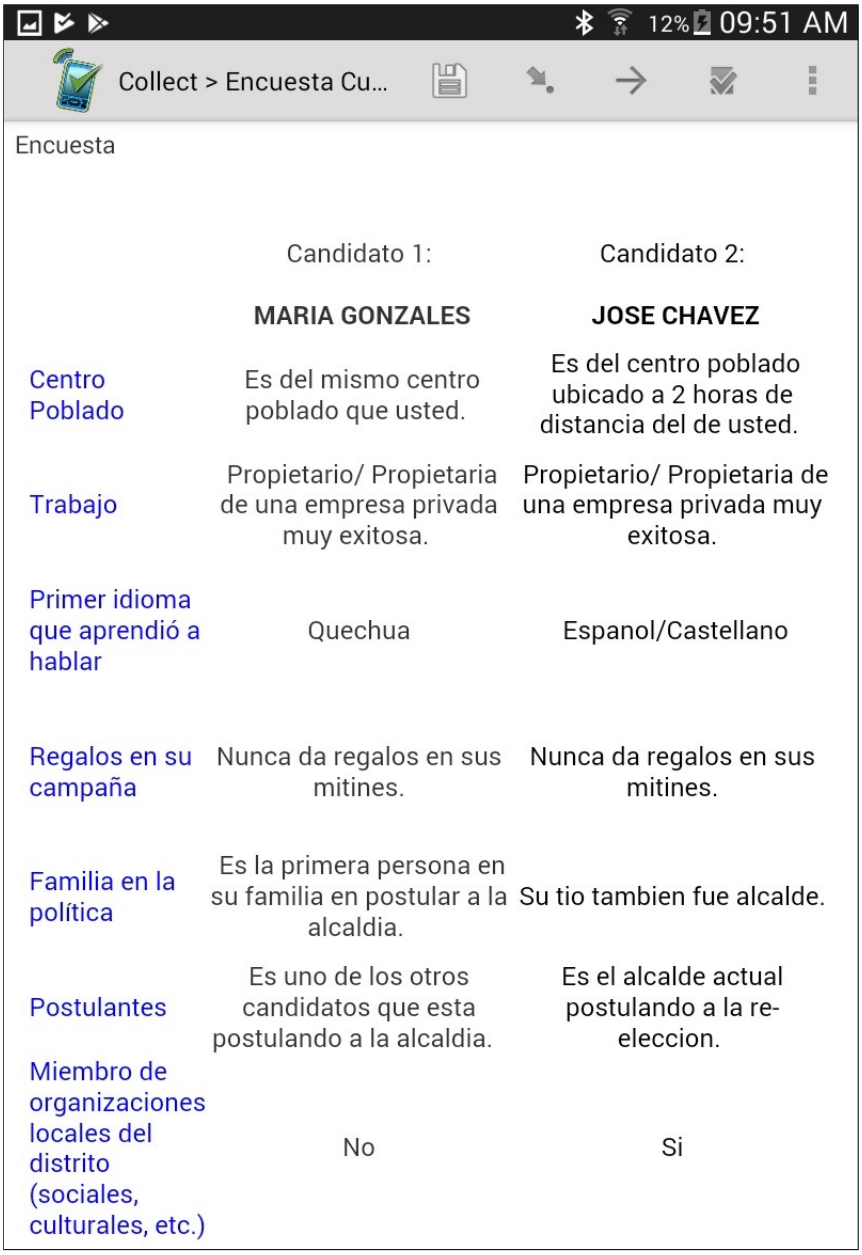
I find similar results using the randomization inference approach described in Cattaneo, Frandsen, & Titiunik (2015). The first step in the methodology is to use covariates to identify a window within which the observations on either side of the cut-off are balanced enough so as to approximate experimental treatment assignment. One constraint is that for the 2006 and 2010 elections, the only candidate-level covariates available are gender (which has little variation) and party type. For the 2014 data, I also have access to candidates' age, years residing in the municipality and education. Using these five covariates, the recommended window is [-0.00137, 0.00137], which includes only 34 observations out of 11,030. This is therefore the window estimated using the best data I can access.

The second step is to run the RDD analysis using randomization inference to test the sharp null of no treatment effect, and only with observations within that window. Using only the 2014 data, the point estimate is -0.364 (p-value .032), which is actually slightly larger than the estimate using the standard RDD method. I also ran the analysis on the full dataset (2006, 2010 and 2014 elections) using the window estimated from 2014, and again the point estimate is negative and significant (-0.213, p-value 0.026).

Using only the two candidate covariates that are available across all 3 election years (gender and party type), the recommended window is only [-0.00078, 0.00078], which is smaller than with the additional covariates available in 2014, only yielding 57 candidates out of 34,737. Using randomization inference on this small window, the point estimate (-0.306) is sizable but marginally insignificant at conventional levels (p-value 0.118). I then ran the randomization inference procedure using increasingly larger bandwidths (by .00001) to find the smallest possible bandwidth with an effect size, which is [-0.00085, 0.00085], and is still smaller than the 2014 estimated window. Overall, these exercises suggest that the results are robust to using the randomization inference approach.

Appendix B Conjoint Experiment As It Appeared To Respondents

Figure B.1: Tablet Image of Two Candidate Comparison



Appendix C Conjoint Experiment Candidate Attributes

Table C.1: The Eight Candidate Attributes Used in the Conjoint Experiment

Attribute	**Values**	**Language Used in the Profile**
Incumbency Status	Incumbent: no performance information	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election.
	Incumbent: good programmatic performance	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election. As mayor, he/she implemented a lot of public works projects, like building roads and irrigation canals.
	Incumbent: bad programmatic performance	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election. As mayor, he/she did not implement hardly any public works projects, like building roads and irrigation canals.
	Incumbent: good personalistic performance	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election. As mayor, he/she gave individual financial help to residents if they asked for it.
	Incumbent: bad personalistic performance	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election. As mayor, he/she did not give individual financial help to residents if they asked for it.
	Challenger: no performance information	He/she is one of the other candidates running for mayor.
Community ties (1)	Strong links with social organizations	He/she is a member of local social and cultural organizations in the municipality.
	Weak links with social organizations	He/she is not a member of local social and cultural organizations in the municipality.
Community ties (2)	From respondent's *centro poblado* (village)	He/she is from your village.
	From other *centro poblado* (village)	He/she is from the village that is 2 hours away from yours.
Personal wealth	Wealthy/access to own resources	He/she is the owner of a very successful private company.
	Modest economic background	He/she works as a farmer.
Ethnicity	Indigenous	The first language that he/she learned at home was Quechua.
	Not indigenous	The first language that he/she learned at home was Spanish.
Political dynasty	Member of a political dynasty	His/her uncle was also previously mayor.
	First in family to run for office	He/she is the first in his/her family to run for mayor.
Campaign gift giving	Gives out gifts	He/she gives out gifts at campaign rallies.
	Does not give out gifts	He/she never gives out gifts at campaign rallies.
Gender	Male	Male name
	Female	Female name

Appendix D Spanish Language Used in Conjoint Experiment

Table D.1: Spanish Language Used in Conjoint Experiment

Candidate Attribute	**Language Used in the Profile**
Postulantes	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la reelección.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la reelección. Como alcalde, ha hecho muchas obras públicas, como por ejemplo calles y canales de riego.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la reelección. Como alcalde, no ha hecho casi ninguna obra pública, por ejemplo ninguna calle ni ningn canal de riego.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la reelección. Como alcalde, daba ayuda financiera a la población cuando se lo pedían.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la reelección. Como alcalde, no daba ayuda financiera a la población cuando se lo pedían.
	Es uno de los candidatos que está postulando a la alcaldía.
Miembro de organizaciones locales del distrito (sociales, culturales, etc.)	Sí
	No
Centro Poblado	Es del mismo centro poblado que usted.
	Es del centro poblado ubicado a 2 horas de distancia del de usted.
Trabajo	Propietario/Propietaria de una empresa privada muy exitosa.
	Trabaja como agricultor.
Primer idioma que aprendió a hablar	Quechua
	Español/Castellano
Familia en la política	Su tío también fue alcalde.
	Es la primera persona en su familia en postular a la alcaldía.
Regalos en su campaña	Da regalos en sus mítines.
	Nunca da regalos en sus mítines.

Appendix E Additional Information on the Survey and Sampling

The survey was administered among 1061 respondents in 18 urban, peri-urban and rural municipalities in the region of Cusco, located in the Peruvian Andes. The survey was fielded August 12-23, 2017. I designed and managed all aspects of the survey and its implementation. I contracted out with the Peru country office of Innovations for Poverty Action to program the survey on the tablets, rental of and technical trouble shooting with the tablets, and use of IPA servers for daily uploading of the data.

Respondents were required to be between 18 and 70 years old, speak Spanish and be residents of the municipality. A daily, per-enumerator gender quota was employed to ensure equal numbers of male and female respondents.

I selected the region of Cusco for the survey because of the wide variety of districts across the different electoral accountability types I wanted to include in the stratification described below ('never run', 'always lose' and recent incumbent re-election). The region is also home to districts that rank both high and low on social accountability engagement, including on indicators of social conflict over the mayor's performance, lodging complaints against the mayor with the Peruvian Ombudsmen, and self-reported participation in accountability-related civil society organizations in a yearly survey from Peru's National Statistics Institute. At the same time, implementing the survey within one region allows me to control for socio-political, historical and geographic factors that likely vary across regions. Finally, I had already conducted qualitative fieldwork in two municipalities in the region, during which I confirmed the presence of the accountability-related phenomenon to be studied in the survey.

The 18 municipalities were randomly sampled, then individual residents were randomly sampled from within them. I reduced the possible sampling frame of municipalities in two ways. First, as in the broader study, I excluded the 13 municipalities that are both provincial and district capitals, because these districts have only one mayor whose responsi-

bilities cover managing both the province and the district in which the provincial capital is located. In these cases, the line of accountability for district-level performance is confused with that of provincial-level performance. Second, for budgetary reasons, I had to ensure enumerators could visit the selected municipalities and return within the same day, so I reduced the set of municipalities to include only those within an approximately 3-hour bus drive from Cusco city (the regional capital). The 18 municipalities were drawn from this final potential sample of 59 of Cusco's 95 districts.

To ensure variation in respondents across municipalities with distinct variants of electoral accountability, and because these variants are not uniform across the population, I stratified the sample on municipal type, according to four electoral accountability outcomes. The first two are what I term 'never run' and 'always lose' districts, meaning those in which across the three most recent mayoral elections, three different incumbents either always chose not to run, or always ran but always lost; in these districts, the electoral connection has almost certainly broken down. In the third, on the other hand, where incumbents won re-election in the most recent election (2014), it is at least possible electoral accountability is functioning well, with incumbents presumably being rewarded for good performance. The fourth strata of municipalities is composed of all those districts that are not included in the first three types. It represents districts with electoral accountability outcomes that fall somewhere between the two extremes: incumbents often, though not necessarily always, run for office, and sometimes, though not always, win re-election.

Within each of the municipal types, municipalities were drawn probability proportional to size (PPS), then a uniform number of respondents was sampled within each municipality (about 60 in each of the 18 municipalities). In each of the two districts sampled in urban Cusco, enumerators randomly sampled respondents from two different neighborhoods. In the 16 remaining rural and peri-urban municipalities, in 11 cases, respondents were sampled from the main population center where the municipal government is located, and in 5 cases, enumerators were able to sample from smaller villages in addition to the main town.

Appendix F Additional Information on the Conjoint Experiment

Two additional questions were included as part of the conjoint: 1) "If this candidate were elected, how likely is it that he/she would do a good job as mayor?"; 2) "If this candidate were elected, how likely is it that he/she would respond well to complaints or suggestions from people like you?". To avoid priming effects on the main outcome of interest (the forced choice between two candidates), these two rating questions come after the four choice questions, and thus were only asked for the two candidates from the last choice set. The results are largely identical to the main conjoint question, and therefore are not presented here. The only difference is that the performance condition for good public works is not distinguishable from zero in both of the questions, and the good performance in financial assistance condition is not distinguishable from zero in the responsiveness question (though it is negative and significant in the 'doing a good job as mayor' question). The sample size in both questions is much smaller (1967 observations), making precision difficult.

I implemented two constraints to the randomization of the individual candidate characteristics. First, for the incumbency status characteristic, one of the two candidate profiles was always the challenger, since it would be impossible to have two incumbents running against each other. Second, two female candidates were never presented within the same pair of profiles. Because there are so few female mayoral candidates in Peru, it is unrealistic for two women to run against each other (outside of Lima, at least). Thus there are more male candidates than female (2/3 to 1/3), because there were pairs of candidates who were both male, but no pairs of candidates who were both female.

All other combinations of attributes were possible, meaning all values had an equal probability of being assigned to each candidate. This means that for all other candidate characteristics, the two profiles could contain the same values (for example, they could both be native Quechua speakers or both give gifts at rallies).

Due to limitations in the survey software used and because it was implemented in-person rather than online, it was not possible to completely randomize the presentation order of the candidate characteristics. Instead, each respondent was randomly selected to see the candidate characteristics listed in one of three possible orders.[20] For ease of presentation, a given respondent saw all sets of candidate profiles presented in the same order.

One concern with the conjoint set-up is if respondents are asked to choose between hypothetical candidates with traits they they might not actually see in the political context in which they live. For example, if corruption is viewed as widespread, an incumbent mayor described as not being corrupt might be unimaginable. To address this concern, I included questions in the broader survey to assess the prevalence of two of the candidate traits for which this might be a problem.

First, a respondent may have never seen an incumbent mayor who they believed did a good job in the two performance aspects I test (public works and individual financial assistance). I therefore included the questions "How many of the past mayors in this municipality have implemented public works projects?" and "How many of the past mayors in this municipality have provided residents with individual financial help when they have asked for it for a family or health emergency?"[21]

Table F.1 shows responses to the two questions across the full sample. We would be worried about the hypothetical candidates being unrealistic if all respondents reported that either 'all' or 'none' of the mayors implemented the two performance indicators. For public works, the responses are well distributed, with few in the 'all' or 'none' categories. For financial assistance, few respondents answered 'all' though 19% answered 'none'. Still, these results suggest on the whole that an incumbent who either did or did not provide

[20] To randomly select the three orders, I first generated all possible order permutations of the seven candidate characteristics in which the presentation order could vary (names are always presented at the top, next to candidate number). To ensure the three orders all began with a different candidate characteristic, I first divided the orders into seven groups such that in each group, all orders began with the same characteristic. I randomly sampled one order from each of the seven groups, then randomly sampled three of those orders to arrive at the final set of three possible presentation orders.

[21] The two questions appeared together but the order was randomized, such that about half of respondents saw the public works question first, while the other half saw the financial assistance question first.

public works or financial assistance while in office is a reasonably realistic candidate for most respondents.

The second candidate trait that may be unrealistic is not giving out gifts at campaign rallies, especially considering that results from prior qualitative interviews suggested the practice was widespread. To assess this possibility, I included in the broader survey the following question: "In the last mayoral election in October 2014, how many of the candidates gave out gifts at their campaign events, such as at rallies or meetings?" Again, the distribution of responses suggests that candidates that both offer and do not offer gifts are realistic, as Table F.2 shows.

Table F.1: How Many Mayors in this Municipality...

	All	Majority	Half	Some	None
... implemented public works projects?	7.9%	20.3%	16.7%	46.9%	1.4%
... provided individual financial help?	6.6%	10%	10.2%	39.3%	19%

Note: Rounding to tenth of a percent. Percentages for 'No response' and 'Don't Know' not shown.

Table F.2: In the Last Mayoral Election in October 2014, How Many Candidates...

	All	Majority	Half	Some	None
... gave gifts as part of their campaign?	26.9%	27.9%	9%	19.5%	5.8%

Note: Rounding to tenth of a percent. Percentages for 'No response' and 'Don't Know' not shown.

Table F.3 presents the point estimates and p-values for each of the candidate attributes. The same results are depicted visually in Figure 2 in the main text.

Table F.3: Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE)

Attribute	**Level**	**AMCE Estimate**
Political Dynasty	*Baseline: Uncle was also previously mayor*	
	First in family to run	0.048 ***
		(0.0114)
Gender	*Baseline: Male*	
	Female	0.031 *
		(0.0143)
Gifts in Campaigns	*Baseline: Does not give gifts*	
	Gives gifts	-0.115 ***
		(0.012)
Incumbent	*Baseline: Challenger*	
	Incumbent: No performance information	-0.16 ***
		(0.0245)
	Incumbent: Good performance - public works	-0.098 ***
		(0.0245)
	Incumbent: Good performance - fin aid	-0.142 ***
		(0.0245)
	Incumbent: Bad performance - fin aid	-0.283 ***
		(0.0242)
	Incumbent: Bad performance - public works	-0.346 ***
		(0.0218)
First Language	*Baseline: Spanish*	
	Quechua	0.037 ***
		(0.0113)
Social Organizations	*Baseline: No*	
	Yes	0.008
		(0.0105)
Village	*Baseline: Village 2 hours away*	
	Same village	0.021
		(0.0127)
Work/Wealth	*Baseline: Farmer*	
	Business owner	-0.074 ***
		(0.0124)
Observations		7576

Notes:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

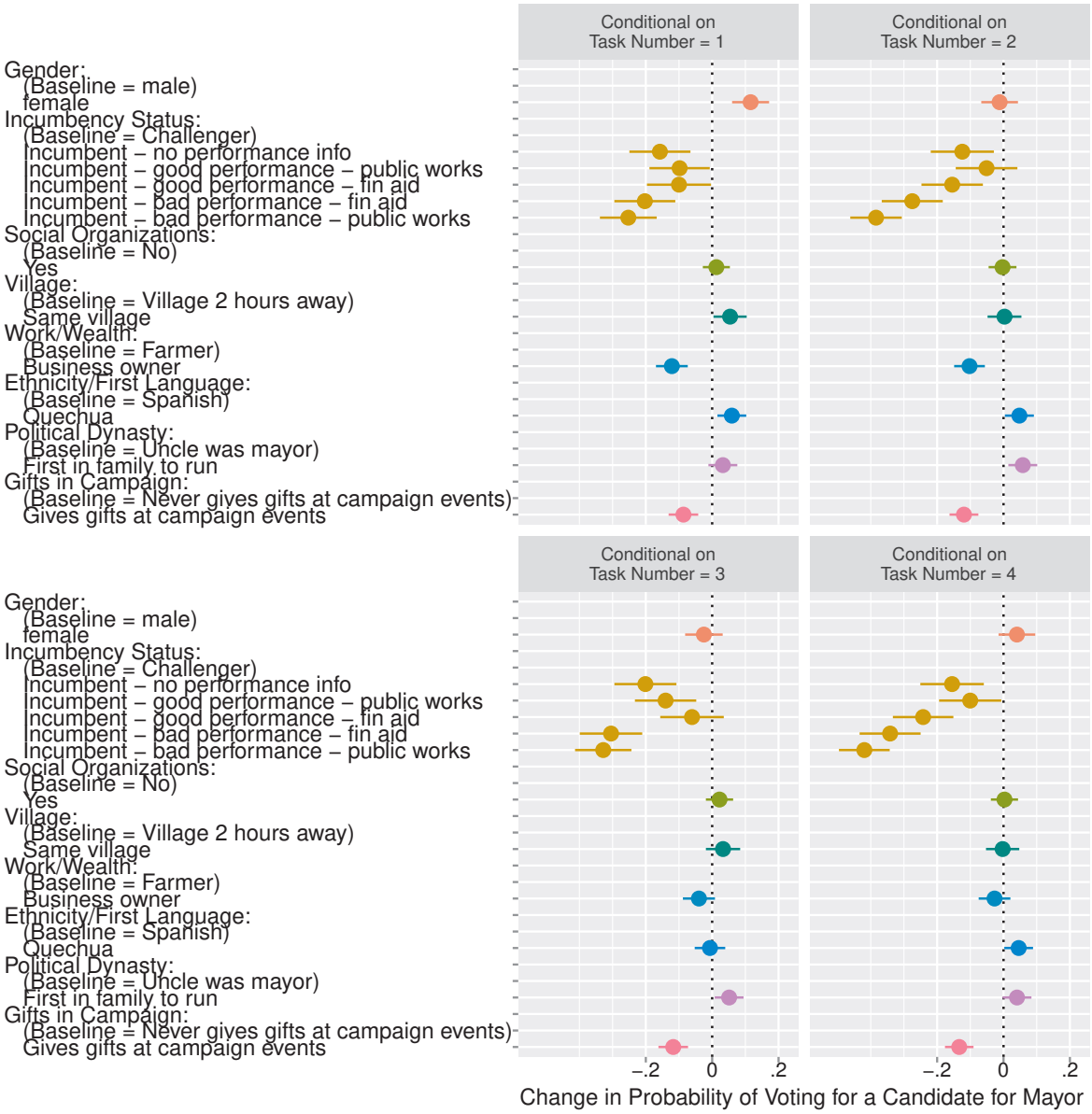
Appendix G Conjoint Experiment Robustness Checks

I conduct a series of robustness checks that are standard practice for conjoint experiments. First, respondents were shown four different pairs of candidates and asked to select their preferred candidate for mayor after each pair (or task). One concern is therefore whether there are carryover effects, meaning respondents' preferences for candidate attributes change across rounds of questions. Figure G.1 shows how the results are robust across the four different tasks. In other words, respondents' bias against incumbents holds regardless of whether it is the first or subsequent pair of candidates they saw.

Second, it might also be the case that respondents systematically prefer the first (or second) candidate profile they see in the pair. Figure G.2 discounts this possibility by showing that the estimates are the same regardless of if the candidate with that particular trait was the first or second candidate profile shown (in other words, if the candidate was on the left or right of the tablet screen).

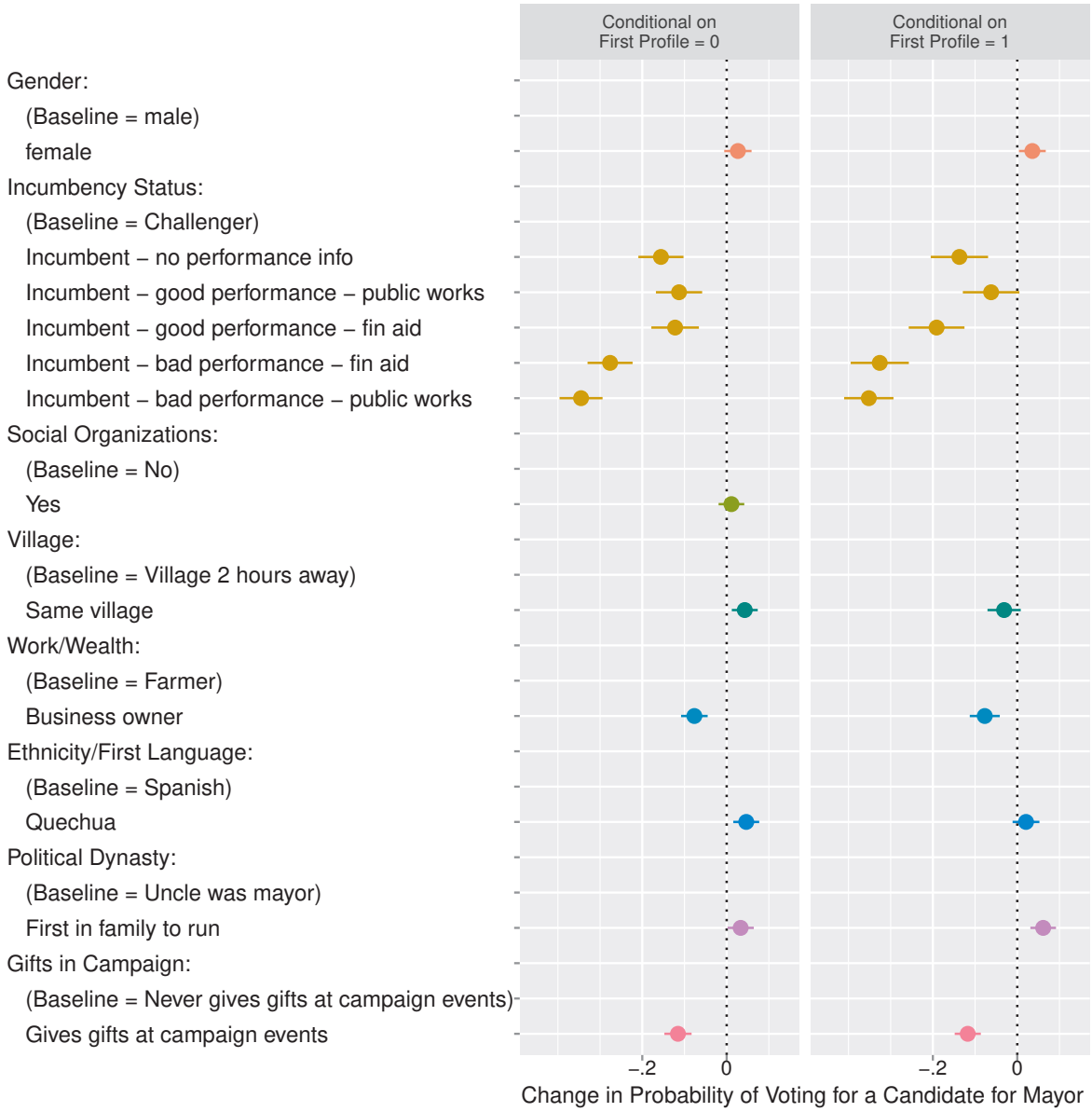
Finally, I conduct two checks to confirm that the randomization was successful. First, Table G.1 shows that the frequency distributions of each of the candidate traits across the sample matches the randomization constraints described in Appendix F. Second, I test whether the candidate traits were randomly viewed across respondents. Results may be skewed if, for example, women were more likely to see profiles of incumbents with good public works performance than were male respondents. Columns 1-5 in Table G.2 show separate regressions of each candidate trait on the five respondent traits. An omnibus F-test is insignificant, suggesting that the candidate traits are jointly insignificant in each of the five respondent trait models.

Figure G.1: Conjoint Results Conditional on Task Number



Each panel shows the analysis conducted only on the sub-sample of candidates shown in the corresponding task number. The dependent variable is whether the candidate profile was selected over the other candidate profile seen in the pair, after being prompted by the question "Which of these candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?". Clustered standard errors calculated at the level of the individual to account for correlation between the same individual's candidate choices. Bars show 95% confidence intervals. Baseline values have no point estimates or confidence intervals.

Figure G.2: Conjoint Results Conditional on Profile Order



Each panel shows the analysis conducted only on the sub-sample of candidates shown in the first or second profile respectively. The dependent variable is whether the candidate profile was selected over the other candidate profile seen in the pair, after being prompted by the question "Which of these candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your municipality?". Clustered standard errors calculated at the level of the individual to account for correlation between the same individual's candidate choices. Bars show 95% confidence intervals. Baseline values have no point estimates or confidence intervals.

Table G.1: Randomization Check: Frequency of Candidate Attributes

Attribute	**Values**	**Frequency Across Sample**	**Randomization Constraint**
Incumbency Status	Incumbent: no performance information	10.1%	10%
	Incumbent: good programmatic performance	10.2%	10%
	Incumbent: bad programmatic performance	10.1%	10%
	Incumbent: good personalistic performance	9.7%	10%
	Incumbent: bad personalistic performance	9.8%	10%
	Challenger: no performance information	50%	50%
Community ties (1)	Strong links with social organizations	50.1%	50%
	Weak links with social organizations	49.9%	50%
Community ties (2)	From respondent's *centro poblado* (village)	50.6%	50%
	From other *centro poblado* (village)	49.4%	50%
Personal wealth	Wealthy/access to own resources	50.3%	50%
	Modest economic background	49.7%	50%
Ethnicity	Indigenous	49.4%	50%
	Not indigenous	50.6%	50%
Political dynasty	Member of a political dynasty	50.3%	50%
	First in family to run for office	49.7%	50%
Campaign gift giving	Gives out gifts	49.4%	50%
	Does not give out gifts	50.6%	50%
Gender	Male	64.1%	$66.\overline{6}\%$
	Female	35.9%	$33.\overline{3}\%$

Table G.2: Randomization Check: Candidate Attributes and Respondent Characteristics

	Dependent variable: Respondent Characteristic				
	Age	Education	Gender	Income	Maternal Language
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Political Dynasty (Uncle was mayor)	0.016	−0.017	0.024**	−0.008	−0.009
	(0.019)	(0.044)	(0.012)	(0.026)	(0.010)
Gender (Male)	−0.008	0.031	−0.003	0.011	−0.003
	(0.020)	(0.046)	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.010)
Gifts in Campaign (Never)	0.046**	0.047	−0.003	0.031	0.014
	(0.019)	(0.044)	(0.012)	(0.026)	(0.010)
Incumbent: good performance - public works	−0.038	0.026	−0.014	0.057	0.010
	(0.043)	(0.099)	(0.026)	(0.058)	(0.023)
Incumbent: good performance - fin aid	−0.057	−0.083	−0.012	0.015	0.013
	(0.044)	(0.102)	(0.027)	(0.060)	(0.023)
Incumbent: bad performance - fin aid	−0.023	0.069	0.021	0.015	−0.016
	(0.045)	(0.105)	(0.027)	(0.062)	(0.024)
Incumbent: bad performance - public works	−0.089**	−0.024	0.011	−0.016	−0.006
	(0.043)	(0.100)	(0.026)	(0.059)	(0.023)
Incumbent: Challenger	−0.022	−0.023	−0.006	0.020	0.011
	(0.035)	(0.082)	(0.021)	(0.048)	(0.019)
First Language (Quechua)	0.003	0.071	−0.002	0.026	−0.001
	(0.019)	(0.044)	(0.012)	(0.026)	(0.010)
Social Organizations (Yes)	0.040*	−0.044	−0.014	0.010	0.023**
	(0.022)	(0.051)	(0.013)	(0.030)	(0.012)
Village (Same)	0.016	−0.004	0.003	−0.019	−0.022**
	(0.020)	(0.047)	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.011)
Work (Farmer)	0.019	−0.024	0.006	−0.058**	0.010
	(0.020)	(0.046)	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.010)
Constant	1.862***	4.909***	0.510***	2.611***	0.737***
	(0.043)	(0.100)	(0.026)	(0.059)	(0.023)
Observations	7,576	7,544	7,576	7,296	7,544
F Statistic	1.418 (df = 12; 7563)	0.656 (df = 12; 7531)	0.707 (df = 12; 7563)	0.782 (df = 12; 7283)	1.121 (df = 12; 7531)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix H Additional Information about Tests for Alternative Explanations

This section provides additional detail about the tests discussed in the main paper to discount the alternative hypotheses of incumbent performance and access to information. Then it describes tests to reject additional alternative hypotheses related to the political context and the individual characteristics of the candidates themselves.

I use four different measures to test whether incumbent performance explains the incumbency disadvantage. First, I include whether Peru's conditional cash transfer program (JUNTOS) was added during the mayor's term.[22] Unlike corruption, which is often hidden, this outcome is quite visible; put simply, voters know if they or their neighbor became beneficiaries of JUNTOS. Furthermore, it is highly likely voters value this aspect of performance because of its direct link to their immediate well-being. In contrast, a mayor's success in reducing bureaucratic red tape may not be important enough to impact voting decisions. Finally, it is likely local mayors would receive credit for the program's expansion. As with other CCT programs, JUNTOS' beneficiaries are meant to be selected using objective poverty indicators, and the program is managed from the central, not the local level. But given the possibility of local-level manipulation, or at least the perception of it, the likelihood mayors are trying to claim credit for the program, and the fact that local residents may not know or care what level of government implements it, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that voters would reward the mayor with re-election if the program was expanded in their district. Research from Brazil, Honduras and Mexico, which have similarly structured CCT programs, suggests that incumbent mayors are in fact rewarded electorally for CCT roll-out in their municipalities (De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2012; Linos 2013; De La O 2013).

[22] For each election, I code as 1 every district that was added during the mayor's term prior to the election, and code all other JUNTOS districts as 0. There were 292, 307, and 430 new districts added during the mayoral administrations before the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections respectively. I treat as the full universe of cases the 1176 districts that had the JUNTOS program in 2016 in order to compare districts that, because of their poverty and eligibility status, *could* have received JUNTOS with those that actually did. All other districts are marked as missing. Data received from the JUNTOS program in March 2016.

Second, I test for performance in terms of execution of the budget for public works projects. Variation in spending of the budget has been linked with mayoral capacity in Peru (Loayza, Rigolini, and Calvo-González 2014), and once a recall election was initiated, Peruvian incumbents with lower budget execution were more likely to be successfully removed from office through the recall (Holland and Incio 2018). In other contexts, voters have been shown to reward incumbents for spending on visible public works projects (Johannessen 2019). Furthermore, results from the survey presented in this paper show how 95.6% percent of respondents describe providing public works projects as a very important or important responsibility of the mayor. Respondents were also asked to rate the performance of their current mayor, and then to explain what was the most important aspect of their performance that impacted their assessment. A full 62.4% said public works projects.

Third, I include the change in the district-level Human Development Index (HDI) over the mayor's term, with the logic that if voters see their socio-economic well-being improved, they are likely to reward the mayor. The HDI is a composite indicator that combines three key measures of development: life expectancy at birth, years of schooling, and GNI per capita. Based on data from Peru's National Institute for Statistics and Information,[23] the HDI for every district is calculated for 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2012.[24] The HDI years do not match up perfectly with election years: for the 2006 election, I used the difference between a district's 2003 and 2007 HDI; for 2010, I used the difference between 2007 and 2010; and for the 2014 election, I used the difference between HDI in 2010 and 2012.

Finally, I use public opinion survey data on how respondents evaluate the mayor's management of municipal governance. The data comes from a yearly national household survey (ENAHO - *Encuesta Nacional de Hogares*) that is a random sample of districts and of households within those districts, conducted by Peru's National Institute for Statistics and Information. The survey includes a series of questions asking respondents to rate the

[23] *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática* (INEI), https://www.inei.gob.pe/

[24] http://www.pe.undp.org/content/peru/es/home/library/poverty/Informesobredesarrollohumano2013/IDHPeru2013.html (Downloaded 10 March 2016)

performance of different levels of government (national, regional, provincial and municipal). I create a district average of responses to the question about the municipal level.[25]

Table 1 in the main text depicts the results. None of the four measures of mayoral performance are significant, suggesting that performing well in these four measures does not give incumbents any electoral benefit in terms of overcoming the incumbency disadvantage.

I also test the hypothesis that lack of access to political information prevents voters from effectively sanctioning or rewarding incumbents. I use district-level data from the 2007 census, creating an average across three measures of owning information-related technology (cell phones, television and internet). I also include two ENAHO survey questions, asking how often respondents inform themselves about politics and how much interest they have in politics. As Table 2 in the main text shows, none of the variables associated with having greater access to political information were significant, suggesting that an information constraint—not knowing how the incumbent is performing—is not the explanation for why voters prefer challengers.

Next, I test two explanations related to the political context. Since districts that are more competitive electorally may be simply harder for incumbents to win, I include the effective number of parties from the previous election (time *t-1*).[26] I also gauge whether a candidate's support was widespread across villages or more concentrated, as perhaps successful incumbents are those who cultivate sufficiently strong support in a few key villages. Given that elections are won with with a plurality and no run-off, candidates need not earn support from across the municipality to win. Using precinct level returns, I calculate the variance of the precinct voteshare across all precincts in the district for each candidate from the previous election (time *t-1*).[27] A lower variance would indicate the candidate had re-

[25] The question is only available beginning in 2011, meaning it can only be tested with data from the 2014 election.

[26] I include data from time *t-1* because candidate-level data is missing for candidates who choose not to run in time *t*. Recall the analysis is unconditional on running, so all candidates from time *t-1* are included, even if they do not run in time *t*.

[27] A special thank you to José Incio who provided me with the effective number of parties measure and the precinct-level elections returns.

ceived consistent levels of voter support across villages. As Appendix Table H.1 shows, none of these variables are significant, suggesting they do not explain when incumbents are able to overcome the incumbency disadvantage.

Third, a unique and potentially relevant feature of Peruvian local politics is the prevalence of recalls, a constitutionally-mandated policy through which citizens can petition to put the standing mayor up for a recall vote. Recalls have become surprisingly common in Peruvian municipalities, though a 2015 law requiring that recalls be held much later in a mayor's term and allowing for the removed mayor to pick her successor has dampened their use significantly (Holland and Incio 2018). To see if districts with high recalls behave differently, and to evaluate if the incumbency bias is driven by municipalities who tend toward holding recalls, following Holland and Incio (2018), I included a binary measure for whether a petition was made to begin gathering signatures and whether enough signatures were gathered to hold a recall in both the current and the previous term.[28] Again, none of these variables is significant, as Appendix Table H.1 shows.

Finally, particular characteristics of the incumbent could impact whether voters are willing to give that incumbent a second chance in office despite an overall preference for challengers. All candidates running for mayor are required to submit an *hoja de vida* to the National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* - JNE) which includes information like age, gender, education and past experience. Beginning in the 2010 elections, candidates had to submit their *hoja de vida* in an electronic format that was then uploaded to a JNE portal.[29] Though the candidate data is available for both the 2010 and 2014 elections, the 2010 RDD data only includes candidates who ran in 2006, so I can only use the 2014 RDD data, which includes candidates from 2010. The available characteristics include age, education, whether the candidate has civil or penal charges pending, years residing

[28] The data was generously provided by José Incio.

[29] Data from the *hojas de vida* was originally obtained through webscraping of the *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones*' website, Infogob.com.pe, through assistance from the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science. Additional data was provided directly by the JNE. The datasets were obtained through joint work with Horacio Larreguy and Miguel Ángel Carpio (Carpio et al. 2019).

in the municipality, whether they have previously held any elected office, and if they have held a leadership position within their party. As Appendix Table H.2 shows, none of these candidate characteristics is significant, suggesting that these particular traits do not impact incumbents' electoral disadvantage.

Table H.1: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Political Competition and Recalls

	DV: Candidate Won Election				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Incumbent	−0.293***	−0.246***	−0.247***	−0.248***	−0.248***
	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Voteshare Margin Previous	2.953***	2.663***	2.890***	2.903***	2.890***
	(0.267)	(0.200)	(0.197)	(0.197)	(0.196)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	−2.352***	−1.957***	−2.216***	−2.223***	−2.185***
	(0.344)	(0.289)	(0.270)	(0.270)	(0.271)
Incumbent X Voteshare Variance Previous	−0.003				
	(0.025)				
Incumbent X ENP		0.028			
		(0.020)			
Incumbent X Recall Requested			0.002		
			(0.019)		
Incumbent X Recall Held				0.010	
				(0.017)	
Incumbent X Recall Held Previous					0.020
					(0.019)
Constant	0.407***	0.367***	0.371***	0.372***	0.371***
	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Observations	5,441	8,913	8,913	8,913	8,913

Note: p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. District-level clustered standard errors reported. Non-interactions and triple interactions 'Incumbent X Margin Previous X Variable' estimated but not reported.

Table H.2: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Candidate Characteristics

	DV: Candidate Won Election						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Incumbent	−0.248***	−0.301***	−0.296***	−0.311***	−0.299***	−0.301***	−0.297***
	(0.019)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Voteshare Margin Previous	2.885***	2.734***	2.713***	2.924***	2.712***	2.771***	2.749***
	(0.197)	(0.412)	(0.420)	(0.404)	(0.426)	(0.417)	(0.421)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	−2.184***	−2.170***	−2.172***	−2.433***	−2.124***	−2.161***	−2.245***
	(0.272)	(0.489)	(0.495)	(0.472)	(0.501)	(0.499)	(0.499)
Incumbent X Female	−0.011						
	(0.014)						
Incumbent X Age		0.049					
		(0.031)					
Incumbent X Post 2ndary Educ			−0.013				
			(0.032)				
Incumbent X Penal Civil Charges				0.025			
				(0.030)			
Incumbent X Years Residing District					−0.024		
					(0.032)		
Incumbent X Previously Elected						0.035	
						(0.031)	
Incumbent X Party Position							0.041
							(0.034)
Constant	0.371***	0.409***	0.407***	0.424***	0.409***	0.409***	0.409***
	(0.013)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Observations	8,919	2,394	2,389	2,643	2,372	2,394	2,394

Note: p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. District-level clustered standard errors reported. Non-interactions and triple interactions 'Incumbent X Margin Previous X Variable' estimated but not reported.