



Electoral (Dis)-Connection: The Limits of Accountability in Weak Institutional Environments

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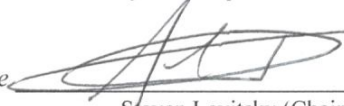
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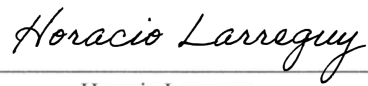
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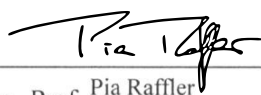
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**Electoral (Dis)-Connection:
The Limits of Accountability
in Weak Institutional Environments**

A dissertation presented

by

Julie Anne Weaver

to

The Department of Government

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Political Science

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

June 2020

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**Electoral (Dis)-Connection:
The Limits of Accountability in Weak Institutional Environments**

Abstract

Conventional academic wisdom holds that the “carrot and stick” of re-election helps voters reign in poorly performing politicians. Empirical research suggests, however, that achieving electoral accountability is harder in practice than in theory.

Electoral accountability requires what Mayhew (1974) famously called the electoral connection: what links politicians to voters is their desire for reelection and their ability to secure it by performing well in office. Though political parties play a fundamental role in maintaining that connection, ensuring support for incumbents through partisan loyalty and incentivizing good performance, scholars know little about the impact on the electoral connection when party systems collapse.

Through a sub-national study of Peruvian mayoral politics, I show that where parties are weak, the electoral connection becomes vulnerable to breakdown unless institutions of governmental oversight are sufficiently strong. Using an original survey, conjoint experiment, qualitative interviews and analysis of electoral, administrative and census data, I document a set of empirical findings that suggest an electoral *dis*-connection in Peruvian politics: an incumbency disadvantage; voter rejection of the premise of re-election itself; and a preference for challengers even over incumbents who perform well.

I then present evidence for my argument that weak oversight explains the electoral connection breakdown. The persistent poor performance that ineffective

oversight tends to generate leads voters to doubt politicians' intrinsic motivation. Voters also credit on-the-job learning with incumbents becoming better able to evade governmental controls in a subsequent term, with ineffective sanctions meaning they are more likely to act on their new knowledge. For incumbents, then, voters doubt both their internal drive to excel and the external constraints on their behavior if re-elected. The result is voter skepticism about the benefits of re-election and the potential performance of re-elected mayors, even for incumbents who performed well.

The consequences of an electoral dis-connection are severe, limiting accountability and weakening democracy more broadly. As the conclusion details, other countries with similarly weak parties and frail oversight institutions may be headed toward an electoral connection breakdown. The Peru case, then, offers insights about the drivers of the electoral dis-connection, its political consequences and ways it may be repaired.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	x
1 Introduction	1
1.1 The Electoral Dis-connection Puzzle	6
1.2 Weak Oversight and the Electoral Connection Breakdown	11
1.3 A Case Study of Peru	15
1.4 Implications for the Study of Democratic Accountability	19
1.5 Methodology	23
1.6 Plan of the Dissertation	35
2 A Theory of Electoral Dis-connection	37
2.1 Political Parties and the Electoral Connection	41
2.2 The Effect of Oversight Institutions on Politicians' Performance	47
2.3 How Weak Oversight Impacts Voter Perceptions of Likely Second-term Performance	52
2.4 Adjudicating Between Competing Accounts of Voting Behavior in Re- Elections	62
2.5 Conclusion	75
Part I: The Electoral Disconnection in Peru	77
3 Anti-Incumbent Bias and the Rejection of Re-election	78
3.1 Low Rates of Mayoral Re-election	80
3.2 The Mayoral Incumbency Disadvantage	83
3.3 Rejection of the Premise of Re-election	91
3.4 Conclusion	97
4 Voting Them All Out: Punishing High Performing Incumbents	99

4.1	Assessing Vote Choice in Mayoral Re-elections	102
4.2	Choosing a Challenger Over an Incumbent Who Performed Well . . .	115
4.3	Performance and the Incumbency Disadvantage	126
4.4	Conclusion	133
Part II: Explaining the Electoral Disconnection		135
5	Testing the Micro-foundations: Voter Attitudes about Incumbents and Second-Term Performance	136
5.1	Voter Beliefs about Politicians, Political Learning and Likely Second Term Performance	140
5.2	The Impact of Attitudes on Voting Behavior	148
5.3	Conclusion	165
6	The Key Role of Weak Oversight Institutions	168
6.1	The Rationale for Banning Re-election	170
6.2	Testing the Link Between Oversight Institutions and the Incumbency Disadvantage	179
6.3	Rejecting Alternative Explanations	188
6.4	Conclusion	197
7	Conclusions	199
7.1	Academic Contributions	199
7.2	Generalizability of the Theory	201
7.3	Directions for Future Research	207
7.4	Reflecting on Accountability in Peru and Beyond	209
Appendices		212
A	Regression Discontinuity Design Robustness Checks	213
B	Additional Information about the Conjoint Experiment	222
C	Conjoint Experiment Robustness Checks	226
D	Conjoint Experiment Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits Conditional on Respondent Characteristics	230
Bibliography		238

List of Figures

2.1	How Poor Oversight Generates an Electoral Dis-connection When Parties are Weak	40
2.2	Impact of Oversight on the Performance Effects of Political Learning	57
3.1	Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006-2014 .	88
3.2	Do You Agree With Mayors Being Able to Run for Re-election? . . .	94
4.1	Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Probability of Receiving Respondents' Vote	117
5.1	Testing the Theory of How Poor Oversight Generates an Electoral dis-connection	139
5.2	If a Mayor Does a Good Job in Office and is Re-elected, How Likely Will He/She Do a Good Job in a Second Term?	145
5.3	Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents' Reported Belief in the Likelihood Good Performance Will Be Repeated	155
5.4	Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents' Reported Belief That Incumbents Learn to Be Corrupt In Office	156
7.1	Partisanship in Latin America	203
7.2	Experience with Corruption in Municipal Government in Latin America	204
7.3	Latin American Perceptions of the Proportion of Politicians that are Corrupt	205
A.1	RDD Estimates' Sensitivity to Bandwidth Choice	213
A.2	McCrary Density Test	214
A.3	Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006	215
A.4	Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2010	216
A.5	Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2014	217
A.6	Incumbency Disadvantage Conditional on Incumbent Re-Running, 2006-2014	218
A.7	Impact of Previous Voteshare on Decision to Run, 2006-2014	219
B.1	Tablet Image of Conjoint as it Appeared to Respondents	223
C.1	Conjoint Results Conditional on Task Number	227

C.2	Conjoint Results Conditional on Profile Order	228
D.1	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Municipality Type	231
D.2	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Municipality Type, Never Run-Always Lose	232
D.3	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Gender	233
D.4	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Income	234
D.5	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent First Language	235
D.6	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Education	236
D.7	Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Age	237

List of Tables

1.1	Selection of Paired Municipalities	30
2.1	Testable Implications Related to Voter Attitudes	67
2.2	Testable Implications of Voter Behavior in Re-Elections	70
3.1	Predictors of Support for the Legal Option of Mayoral Re-election . .	96
4.1	Conjoint Set-up as it Appeared To Respondents (English Translation)	105
4.2	The Eight Candidate Attributes Used in the Conjoint Experiment . .	106
4.3	How Many Mayors in this Municipality...	115
4.4	In the Last Mayoral Election in October 2014, How Many Candidates...	115
4.5	RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Incumbent Performance	132
5.1	Why do you believe a mayor who did a good job in their first period and is re-elected will <i>not</i> do a good job in the second period?	146
5.2	Characteristics of Challengers Who Beat Incumbents (2010 and 2014)	152
5.3	Why Do You Agree with Mayoral Re-election?	163
5.4	Why Do You Disagree with Mayoral Re-election?	164
6.1	RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Voter Trust in Institutions	185
6.2	RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Political Information . .	192
6.3	RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Political Competition, Fragmenta- tion and Recalls	196
B.1	Candidate Attributes (Spanish Language) Used in Conjoint Experiment	224
B.2	Conjoint Experiment Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE) .	225
C.1	Randomization Check: Frequency of Candidate Attributes	226
C.2	Randomization Check: Candidate Attributes and Respondent Charac- teristics	229

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1 | Introduction

Strengthening government accountability is one of the biggest contemporary challenges faced by countries across the globe, especially at the local level, where access to vital public services makes the problem of impunity and unaccountable government more urgent. Media images of mass street protests in countless countries worldwide demonstrate just one serious consequence of the poor government performance and low quality public services that weak accountability generates. Under-performing schools, decaying health clinics, poor quality public transportation, corruption—citizens have registered their dissatisfaction and anger with these types of bad performance in office in myriad ways. But how can they get politicians to actually perform better?

Conventional academic wisdom holds that the “carrot and stick” of re-election gives voters a tool for reigning in poorly performing politicians. Indeed, it is a central tenet of political science that allowing politicians to run for re-election, and then rewarding them with a subsequent term if they perform well, creates an important incentive that pushes politicians to act in line with the wants and desires of their constituents.

Despite the simplicity of the premise, however, patterns in voting behavior and the performance of re-elected politicians suggests achieving electoral accountability—the use of re-elections to hold politicians accountable—is harder in practice than

in theory. Evidence abounds of poorly performing politicians being re-elected, suggesting voters face difficulties in effectively sanctioning elected officials. Theoretical accounts have argued electoral accountability may break down because voters lack or are unable to use accurate information about incumbent performance, or because non-performance factors like partisanship or ethnicity come to outweigh how the incumbent performed. Yet neither of these accounts questions the underlying assumption that voters, to greater or lesser extents, *want* to both punish poorly performing politicians and reward strong performers with a second term.

If we look more closely at voting behavior in certain contexts, we find evidence suggesting this assumption may not hold, raising puzzling questions about the extent to which the central tenet of electoral accountability applies more broadly. One such case is Peru, a context representative of a larger set of Latin American countries where the party system and state institutions as a whole are largely weak. Researchers have already highlighted cases where voters reject punishing incumbents because they prioritize other non-performance characteristics, but what has received less attention is the other side of the coin: whether voters actually want to reward good performance. Evidence suggests Peruvians are more than willing to vote out poor performers. But voters are not simply identifying then sanctioning only the bad apples. Instead, voters are so biased against incumbents that they seem to prefer challengers even over incumbents who perform well, meaning good performers are not being rewarded. Conventional academic wisdom about electoral accountability holds that it is precisely the possibility of being rewarded with an additional term in office that motivates politicians to perform (Ashworth 2012). Why aren't voters willing, then, to give these strong incumbents a second term?

In another stark example of how voter attitudes may not align with the assumptions of electoral accountability, in December 2018, an astounding 85.81% of Pe-

ruvian voters in a national referendum opted to ban Congressional re-election. Three years earlier, while Peru's Congress debated outlawing mayoral re-election, public opinion polling suggested 67% of Peruvians agreed with the proposed law.¹ Why did Peruvian voters feel so strongly that politicians not have the right to seek re-election? Re-election rates for mayors were already quite low compared to many other countries. Why not just vote poor performers out of office, rather than making it impossible for them to run in the first place? Why might voters reject incumbent re-election despite the potentially beneficial effects on incentivizing good performance?

Electoral accountability requires what Mayhew (1974) famously called the electoral connection: what effectively links politicians to voters is their desire for re-election and their ability to secure it by performing well in office. For the electoral connection to exist, a number of conditions have to hold beyond merely having the legal right to seek re-election. Politicians have to actually want to run. Both incumbents and challengers must have a realistic chance of winning. And voters must be willing to use incumbent performance in office as an input in their voting decisions, not only punishing poor performance but also rewarding politicians who excel.

In most countries, an electoral connection accurately describes the relationship between voters and politicians. Many, if not most, elected officials seek a second term, and enough of them win it to make it seem like a realistic possibility for the rest. Good performance in office, while not a guarantee of re-election, at least makes it more likely. In these contexts, the electoral connection is seen as both giving politicians an incentive to perform and giving voters a tool—the prospect of granting or denying a subsequent term—with which they can keep their elected officials accountable.

Peruvian local politics, however, would more accurately be characterized as

¹ Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, April 2015.

exhibiting an electoral *dis*-connection. A study of Peru therefore offers an important opportunity for theory-building about the conditions under which the electoral connection may become vulnerable and the factors that ultimately lead to its demise. The majority of empirical work on electoral accountability comes from contexts where party systems are strong, yet there are many reasons to believe that political parties themselves help to keep the electoral connection going. Through a detailed sub-national study of mayoral politics in Peru, a weak state with a frail party system, this project aims to shed light on how the electoral connection can become severed in contexts where political parties are unable to keep that connection strong.

My core argument is that in countries where parties are weak, and the electoral connection thus becomes vulnerable to breakdown, the system of governmental oversight becomes key to maintaining an electoral connection between voters and politicians. I contend that this occurs because weak oversight and the poor performance it tends to make more likely lead voters to become skeptical of both the intrinsic motivation and external constraint on behavior for incumbents in their second term, making them question the potential performance of re-elected mayors and the benefits of re-election more broadly.

In particular, I argue that where non-electoral oversight institutions are frail, the lack of effective sanctions can lead to persistent poor performance in office, which causes voters to question politicians' inherent goodness and motivation. Crucially, voters become increasingly skeptical of incumbents in particular. While on-the-job learning is typically seen as leading to better performance, incumbents may also be viewed as using their time in office to develop knowledge and skills to better evade government systems design to detect shirking and corruption. Incumbents may be seen as particularly likely to act on these new skills precisely where sanctions are ineffective and voter disdain for politicians is high. Where non-electoral oversight

is weak, voters are thus likely to perceive incumbents in particular as lacking both intrinsic motivation to serve and, if re-elected, facing lower external constraints on their behavior than challengers who, by default, will be in their first term. This voter skepticism about good incumbent performance in subsequent terms leads to the kind of voter behavior that characterizes an electoral dis-connection: anti-incumbent bias, preference for challengers even over incumbents who performed well, and a desire to ban re-election rather than risk an incumbent winning a second term.

The consequences of an electoral dis-connection like we see in Peru are severe, limiting electoral accountability and weakening democracy more broadly. Though much more scholarly attention has been paid to voters' failure to punish poor performers, rewarding good performers is just as important for incentivizing politicians. And persistent disdain for elected officials, such as the anti-incumbent attitudes shown here, may create a downward spiral whereby voters assume politicians will perform poorly and politicians increasingly live up to those low expectations.

In this introductory chapter, I first outline the conceptual framing for the electoral connection, explaining why it is necessary for electoral accountability, and how it helps to understand the puzzle of Peru's electoral dis-connection. Then I summarize the main argument about the role of strong oversight institutions in maintaining the electoral connection in settings where parties are weak. I discuss the implications of the findings for our understanding of democratic accountability and political behavior in developing countries, as well as the generalizability of the theory. Finally, I outline the methodology. By way of conclusion, I present the road map of the manuscript.

1.1 The Electoral Dis-connection Puzzle

The concept of an electoral connection offers a useful framework for understanding how electoral accountability may vary across countries. In his seminal work on the U.S. Congress, Mayhew (1974) introduces his often-cited conception of the “electoral connection”, in which the mechanism that most closely links Congressional representatives and voters stems from the former’s overarching desire to be re-elected. This desire structures congressional representatives’ activities in office, from constituency services and floor speeches to credit claiming and campaigning. Though originally and still principally focused on Congress, the concept can and has been used to describe the connection between voters and any directly elected official. At its heart, it is a story of the primacy of electoral accountability as the key mechanism that incentivizes politicians’ action. Without the electoral connection, electoral accountability is seen as difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

Electoral accountability is typically conceived in principal-agent terms as a vertical contract between voters and elected officials: voters are principals who ‘hire’ politicians as their agents to create policy and manage public affairs (Moe 1984). Ashworth’s (2012) review of the electoral accountability literature summarizes the basic theoretical framework nicely, in which two components are key. The first, and the larger focus for Mayhew, 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. The second is that voters evaluate the politician’s performance in office in the current term when considering whether to use their vote to reward or sanction the politician when they seek re-election.

Laws prohibiting re-election sever the electoral connection and remove the

possibility of electoral accountability.² But even in cases where re-election is legally permitted, certain other conditions must be present for the electoral connection to hold. First, incumbents have to actually want to win office again, meaning places with very low rates of incumbents seeking re-election might have a weakened electoral connection. Second, conditional on running, incumbents cannot be guaranteed to win. Ferejohn (1999) actually argued that it is not re-election per se but the presence of viable challengers that creates the incentive for incumbent performance.

However, third, incumbents cannot be guaranteed to lose either. Manin, Przeworski and Stokes (1999) argue that when voters always prefer the challenger to the incumbent, it breaks down the accountability relationship completely, and that the greater the incumbent anticipates the challenger winning, the greater her incentive to engage in rent seeking while in office. An emerging literature from developing countries suggests that, in contrast to findings from the United States and other developed democracies, some countries are characterized by an incumbency disadvantage, meaning incumbents are systematically less likely than challengers to be elected at the subsequent election (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titunik 2017; Morales Carrera 2014; Uppal 2009). In these settings, the greater the incumbency disadvantage, and the more it cannot be overcome through good performance, the more the electoral connection has been severed.

The final condition for electoral accountability is that voters have to base their decision about whether to re-elect at least in part on performance, by not only

² In cases where re-election of individual politicians is prohibited, but the party system is strong, voters may be able to hold the party accountable for the politician's behavior by threatening to not re-elect the party's candidate the next time around. A prime example is Mexico. Though re-election was prohibited, at least until a recent reform, researchers have found that the mayor's party—though not the mayor herself—was sanctioned at the polls, thus suggesting the electoral connection was maintained (e.g. Chong et al. 2015; Larreguy, Marshall, and Snyder Jr 2019; Marshall 2019).

punishing bad performance, but also rewarding good performance. Of course, a range of factors outside of performance will influence vote choice, like partisan, ideological or ethnic loyalty. But electoral accountability relies on incumbent performance being at least part of a voter's decision calculus.

Overall, electoral accountability may work to incentivize good performance in office when the electoral connection is strong, with a set of empirical research documenting the incentivizing power of re-elections in generating good performance across a range of developing country settings and aspects of performance (Ferraz and Finan 2011; De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2012; Olken 2007). However, when incumbents become uninterested in seeking subsequent terms in office; when their likelihood of winning re-election is low; or when voters no longer use performance in office to reward or sanction, then the electoral connection becomes severed. As a result, the ability to hold politicians accountable through re-election is constrained.

A set of disparate facts about local politics in Peru helps make the case that, contrary to conventional wisdom that an electoral connection usually describes the relationship between voters and politicians in a democracy, Peru would be better characterized as a case of an electoral *dis*-connection. For example, as the opening statistics made clear, the court of public opinion in Peru has turned against re-election. The ban on Congressional re-election passed by a landslide and public opinion polling suggests sustained support of over 65% for the ban on mayoral re-election as well.³

Examining electoral returns data across three local elections (2006, 2010 and 2014) shows some other unusual trends that, taken together, suggest a breakdown in the electoral connection. The most local level of government in Peru, and the focus of this study, is the district municipality, which is led by a mayor elected once every

³ Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, April 2015, November 2016, and June 2017.

four years. In only about a quarter of Peru’s districts—410 out of 1635—did mayors run for re-election every year across the three elections. These are the districts that most closely fit Mayhew’s conception of incumbents always striving to be re-elected. But even where mayors run, they are more likely to lose than in other countries. For the electoral connection to exist, politicians have to believe they have some chance of being rewarded for their good behavior, but a tendency to not re-elect may begin to signal the futility of exerting the effort to perform well. In Brazil and Chile, re-election rates hover around 60% (Ferraz and Finan 2008) and 65% respectively (Bunker and Navia 2012). In Mexico, incumbent parties win a little less than 50% of the time (Marshall 2019).⁴ In Peru, incumbent re-election rates were much lower, at 35.23%, 33.54% and 29.72% in 2006, 2010 and 2014 respectively. The rates are also slightly declining over time.

These low rates of winning re-election are all the more puzzling when you consider that in most developed democracies, incumbents are thought to enjoy an incumbency advantage relative to challengers, due largely to being able to marshal the resources of office holding to their electoral benefit. For example, incumbents can use their position of visibility and power over local media to spread information about themselves, equivalent to free campaign advertising that their challengers lack, they have a full term in office to provide direct services to potential voters to gain their support, they generate disproportionately greater campaign donations, and they may divert state resources to support their re-election bid (Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder Jr 2006; Boas and Hidalgo 2011; Fourniaies and Hall 2014; King 1991).

In short, in other settings, incumbents capitalize on holding office to increase

⁴ As mentioned earlier, individual incumbents were prevented by law from immediate re-election until a reform passed in 2014. Prior to the new law, scholars of Mexico argued that since the party system is so strong, electoral accountability still operated in practice because voters reward or punish the party of the incumbent in the next election.

their chances of winning re-election. But it is not just that Peruvian mayors seem unable to use their incumbency to their electoral advantage. Instead, holding office actually seems to *dis*-advantage incumbents. Paralleling an emerging literature on incumbency disadvantage in developing countries (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titunik 2017; Uppal 2009), I find that holding office actually makes mayors *less* likely to win the next election. Using a regression discontinuity design (RDD), a methodology applied in the incumbency advantage literature first begun by Lee (2008), I find that incumbents are 24 percentage points more likely to lose the subsequent election (their re-election) than the challengers who they originally barely beat, suggesting that office-holding itself is dramatically lowering their prospects for re-election.

However, even if incumbents were disadvantaged on average, if voters were willing to reward good performers, then the electoral connection could still exist. But perhaps the most puzzling fact of all is that voters seem to reject even those incumbents who perform well. As part of an original in-person survey I fielded among over 1000 respondents in the region of Cusco,⁵ I embedded a candidate choice conjoint experiment, in which respondents saw two different candidates which varied on multiple characteristics, and were asked which of the two they would vote for if they had to choose. Respondents were always shown an incumbent and a challenger, and I randomly varied the description of the incumbent to include no performance information, or good or bad performance in terms of implementing public works projects or providing voters' individual financial assistance if they asked for it. Results suggest that respondents consistently preferred challengers to incumbents, not only when the incumbent performed poorly or when they had no performance information, but even when told the incumbent had done a *good* job in office.

⁵ See also the extensive description in Section 6 of the survey methodology.

Together, these empirical findings about local re-elections—rejecting incumbents’ right to seek re-election, an incumbency disadvantage and voter punishment of even good performance—lead to a set of unanswered questions. If voters so disdain an incumbent, why don’t they simply vote her out of office? Why is it necessary to take the extreme step of making it impossible for her to run? Why are Peru’s mayors unable to marshal the benefits of office to give themselves an electoral advantage? What’s more, why does office-holding actually harm incumbents’ electoral chances? And why would voters want to punish even good performers?

Though on the surface, these disparate facts about local politics in Peru might seem like isolated phenomenon, if we return to Mayhew’s work, we can see that they each are distinct examples of a breakdown in the electoral connection. As I argue in the next section, the same root cause explains each of these phenomenon as well: weak oversight institutions.

1.2 Weak Oversight and the Electoral Connection Breakdown

My main contention is that ineffective systems of government oversight can precipitate a breakdown in the electoral connection when the party system is weak. Parties are a dominant means of organizing politics, structuring both incumbents’ behavior in office and voters’ responses to that behavior. There are many reasons why we may believe that political parties play a central role in maintaining the electoral connection, especially in terms of ensuring voters are willing to at least consider re-electing incumbents. Particularly in developing countries, parties are often key to organizing the kinds of clientelistic benefits that keep voters loyal to incumbents.

Partisan attachments may also link politicians to voters even outside of performance, to the extent partisan loyalty trumps incumbent poor performance. Strong parties can also create their own incentives for good performance, outside of government oversight institutions, such as by controlling lucrative appointments or access to budgets. In addition, where parties are strong, incumbents want to perform well to continue to run on the party ticket. This may especially be the case at the local level, where mayors who do a good job could be rewarded with the chance to run on the party label at increasingly higher levels of office.

Yet across the developing world, we see more and more cases of complete party collapse. What happens to the electoral connection, and thus to electoral accountability more broadly, when parties and partisan attachments are weak? Without partisan loyalty, clientelism or parties' ability to incentivize politicians to perform well, under what conditions can incumbents still convince voters to give them a second chance in office?

I argue that in these contexts, strong systems of horizontal government oversight become key to maintaining the electoral connection. In contrast to the vertical, voter-based and external system of control that comes from electoral accountability, horizontal accountability refers to government oversight from within, including the justice system, as well as independent agencies with the autonomy to oversee politicians' behavior, like the Ombudsmen or Supreme Auditing Institutions.

Horizontal accountability matters for the electoral connection precisely because of the role strong oversight plays in generating better performance in office through credible sanctioning of poor performance (Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2003; Ferraz and Finan 2011; Lagunes 2019, 2018; Olken 2007). By performance, throughout this study I mean both expending the effort to implement public policies and public services, and doing so without engaging in corruption. Weak oversight can

worsen both of these types of performance, through the absence of effective punishment for both shirking and malfeasance.⁶

When voters observe the pervasive poor performance in office that weak oversight makes more probable, disdain for politicians and doubt about their intrinsic motivation to hold the job likely increase. But weak oversight also impacts how voters perceive the external constraints on re-elected incumbents in particular. In addition to its role in incentivizing behavior, those in favor of re-election often argue that elected officials become increasingly better at their jobs the longer they hold office. Politicians learn the intricacies of bureaucratic procedures and develop stronger relationships with other public officials and community stakeholders, both of which makes it easier to do their jobs. But on-the-job learning can take on a sinister hue if it enables politicians to more easily circumvent the systems designed to detect shirking and corruption. Where oversight is weak and disdain for politicians is high, voters are increasingly likely to believe re-elected incumbents will act on these new skills in circumventing detection if given a chance in a subsequent term, precisely because a lack of sanctions means there is little risk to doing so. Re-elected incumbents thus come to be seen as facing even less effective oversight than challengers, who by default would be in their first-term.

Overall, then, when horizontal oversight is weak, voters question both the intrinsic motivation of all politicians and the external constraints on second-term behavior for incumbents in particular. This in turn, I argue, leads to voter skepticism about the likelihood of good behavior in a subsequent term, generating a bias against incumbents and incumbency, a preference for challengers even if incumbents perform

⁶ Of course, many other factors can lead to poor performance, such as lack of capacity or resources, as well as short time horizons. The focus here is on the “extra” poor performance induced by a lack of effective oversight.

well, and perhaps even a rejection of the possibility of seeking re-election in the first place.

The core of my argument is therefore a new theory about voter behavior in re-elections where parties are weak. In such contexts, I explain how voters decide to allot their vote between the incumbent and challengers, and how their vote choice actually ends up undercutting their ability to hold their elected officials accountable. Existing theoretical accounts of electoral accountability assume voters are both willing to consider voting for an incumbent and, to greater and lesser degrees, that they evaluate incumbent performance as they decide how to allot their vote in re-elections. I argue that weak oversight institutions make it so neither of these conditions hold.

Existing models of voter behavior in re-elections are not as successful in accounting for the electoral dis-connection in Peru nor explaining how it emerged. One common theory is identity-based voting, where aspects of identity like partisanship or ethnicity are more dominant drivers of voting decisions, such that they outweigh the desire to reward or punish incumbents (Adida et al. 2017b; Asunka 2016; Besley 2006; Carlson 2015; Eggers et al. 2014; Kayser and Wlezien 2011). However, given Peru’s weak party system, partisanship is not a relevant factor shaping voter preferences, and despite a large indigenous population, neither is ethnicity (Madrid 2011; Paredes 2011; Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005).

More relevant is the most predominant explanation for weak accountability in the electoral accountability literature: constraints on performance information. A failure to reward or punish incumbent behavior is assumed to stem from a lack of access to accurate performance information (Banerjee et al. 2011; Bobonis, Cámara Fuertes, and Schwabe 2016; Chong et al. 2015; Dunning et al. 2019; Ferraz and Finan 2008; Gottlieb 2016; De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2012; Larreguy, Marshall, and Snyder Jr 2019), information not altering voters’ prior beliefs sufficiently enough

to induce sanctioning (Arias et al. 2019; Bhandari, Larreguy, and Marshall 2019; Chong et al. 2015), or voters being unable to successfully attribute blame (Gélineau and Remmer 2006; Martin and Raffler Forthcoming; Sances 2017). Regardless of the mechanism, these studies imply that improving access to and use of information should yield better voter sanctioning. Yet evidence from Peru suggests that even when voters have perfect information about how incumbents performed, they still tend toward preferring challengers even over incumbents who perform well.

In the following chapter, I elaborate even further on the testable implications of these theories and my own in terms of voter attitudes, downstream voter behavior and electoral accountability. For now, I note merely that other main frameworks for understanding voter behavior are insufficient for explaining Peru’s electoral disconnection. This suggests that a different logic of voting has taken hold, one that is better explained by my account of the role of weak parties and ineffective government oversight.

1.3 A Case Study of Peru

Much research on electoral accountability takes places in contexts where political parties are strong, and there are important reasons to believe that parties play a key role in maintaining the electoral connection. We know little, however, about what happens to that connection in the kinds of frail party systems that increasingly characterize contemporary democracies. An in-depth study of the case of Peru helps show how, in cases when political parties are weak, countries without sufficiently strong oversight institutions may not have the necessary conditions in place for electoral accountability to work well. Furthermore, as one of many developing countries whose shift to decentralization created new local levels of government, but without

the necessary state capacity to effectively manage citizen demand, the case of Peru is important for theory-building about how state weakness, particularly at the local level, interacts with frail parties to impact electoral accountability.

Peru is indeed emblematic of a growing set of Latin American countries with weak or collapsing party systems. Countries like Guatemala, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica and Colombia are characterized by extreme instability in terms of the composition of parties competing across elections, as well as in parties' electoral viability and their ideological platform (Mainwaring 2018). Of course, party weakness is not unique to Latin America, with many examples of party system breakdown in countries from Eastern Europe to Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. As I discuss at length in the next chapter, political parties play a key role in maintaining the electoral connection, yet little existing research considers how that connection is sustained when the party system breaks down. This study presents a first effort to do so.

Peru's party system is undeniably weak (Levitsky 2018b; Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Seawright 2012; Tanaka 2006). The breakdown that began in the late 1980s ushered in an incredible proliferation of regional, provincial and sometimes even municipal-level parties, and of quasi-party groupings and alliances. In the 2014 sub-national elections, less than one half (42.1%) of candidates represented a national-level political party. About half of the candidates represented regional-level political movements (51%), with the rest coming from regional alliances (4.4%), and political organizations at the provincial (1.4%) and district municipality levels (1.1%) (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones 2015). The fact that there are parties that exist only at the level of one municipality—there were 160 in 2014—is telling of the extreme fragmentation of the party system (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones 2015). Furthermore, rather than acting as local versions of strong parties, these regional and local groups are

often more accurately described as “coalitions of independents,” meaning short-term alliances lasting a single election (Zavaleta 2014). Local political organization is also sufficiently frail that it makes long-term clientelistic exchange difficult (Muñoz 2019).

The study of Peru also contributes more broadly to our theoretical understanding of the political and electoral consequences of state weakness. Variations in state strength, largely understood as the ability of a state to implement laws and policies as intended and to maintain law and order with some degree of equality (Fukuyama 2004), has been put forth as a core explanation for citizen dissatisfaction with government, poor performance, impunity, high corruption, and inequality, both within Latin America and in other regions (Handlin 2017; Levitsky 2018a; Mainwaring 2006b; Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews 2010). Disaffection with democracy and democratic representation has plagued Peru and an important set of other Andean countries (Mainwaring, Bejarano, and Leongómez 2006), as has the rise of populist, outsider and anti-system politicians in Latin America and beyond (Carreras 2012; Levitsky 2018a; Levitsky and Loxton 2013).

In many developing countries, state weakness has also undercut efforts to decentralize, creating serious political and governance challenges at the local level. The decentralization reforms pushed in the 1990s and early 2000s by international institutions like the World Bank were adopted by a wide range of developing countries, creating a set of nations with very similar legal institutions governing local politics and public management (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2006). These government units are typically tasked with a variety of important responsibilities, from implementing public services like education and health, to building roads, cleaning up trash and granting business licenses. Local politicians are therefore on the front lines of both interactions between citizens and the state and the implementation of crucial public policies designed to address poverty and inequality. Studying electoral accountability

in these new government units is particularly important, as almost all Latin American countries permit either indefinite re-election or allow a second term in office (Došek 2019).⁷

Post-decentralization, evidence emerged of significant problems with the capacity and responsiveness of these newly established local government units.⁸ In many countries, mayors suffer from serious capacity gaps in terms of both implementing policies and responding effectively to citizen demand, in part simply because bureaucratic capacity was too low to supply enough skilled politicians and staff to fill the new government units that decentralization created. Creating additional levels of government may also have yielded unrealistic citizen expectations of what mayors would be capable of achieving, a gap which likely only exacerbated citizen dissatisfaction. This may have been particularly the case with participatory budgeting and other reforms mandated from the center that required local governments to incorporate citizen feedback into policy-making (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014; Casey 2018; McNulty 2019). Surveys of citizens do indeed suggest high levels of dissatisfaction with local government. For example, in the 2016/2017 edition of a public opinion survey in Latin America (LAPOP), less than half of respondents (48.7%) reported being satisfied with locally-provided public services (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017). Approval rates also seem to be declining, as almost every country included in the survey saw a decrease in citizen satisfaction from previous survey rounds. Overall, this local-level state weakness, reflected perhaps most accurately by citizens' low approval of local government, has important implications for electoral accountability,

⁷ Colombia and Peru are the only exceptions, both of which banned mayoral re-election relatively recently, in 2015.

⁸ See, for example, Pande and Olken (2019) for a review of the empirical work focused on governance challenges like poor performance, high corruption, and weak government oversight, particularly at the local level.

which the case of Peru allows us to explore.

Admittedly, Peru may be seen by some as at the more extreme end of these political challenges. For example, its party system is one of the weakest in Latin America (Mainwaring 2018), and satisfaction with local public services and trust in politicians is also at the low end comparatively of the region (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017). That said, a number of other countries are not far behind, and regional averages in these indicators are also falling, suggesting that the voting behavior observed in Peru might soon be the reality for an important set of new countries. A mayoral incumbency disadvantage found in Brazil (Klašnja and Titiunik 2017) and Guatemala (Morales Carrera 2014) provides support for the idea that other countries may be developing a similar electoral dis-connection. Findings from the case, then, offer important foreshadowing for the kinds of political outcomes we might expect to see as more and more party systems weaken across the region and beyond.

1.4 Implications for the Study of Democratic Accountability

My findings suggest that, in settings where the party system is frail, weak oversight institutions can cause a breakdown in the electoral connection, thereby making electoral accountability difficult to achieve. The argument and empirical results have important implications for how we think about incumbency, re-elections and political accountability, as well as the functioning of democracy more broadly. This section offers an outline of these implications and of the generalizability of the theory, the latter of which is also treated in more detail in the conclusion.

This research project contributes to a diverse set of political science litera-

tures. In terms of electoral accountability, the results challenge both the predominant explanation that weak electoral accountability stems from voters' lack of access to performance information and the resulting assumption that alleviating voters' information constraint will improve accountability (see, e.g., Dunning et al. 2019). Instead, I show how even perfect performance information fails to generate political accountability, because in contexts where oversight institutions are weak, information about current performance no longer usefully predicts the likelihood of continued good performance.

My findings about information also contributes to fine-tuning existing models of electoral accountability. Across these accounts, performance in office plays a key role in electoral accountability, in part because it is assumed voters use performance information in one term to infer about the likelihood of continued performance in the next. Accordingly, standard accountability models (e.g., Fearon 1999; Svobik 2013) assume continuity of type across terms. If an incumbent has done a good job in office, she will probably continue to do a good job if re-elected, or so the logic goes. In contrast, my work suggests the ways in which voters may come to doubt the continuity of performance across terms.

Furthermore, I expand on standard accounts of retrospective voting by emphasizing that voters are not only making one retrospective assessment, that of evaluating how the incumbent performed. Rather, they simultaneously make a second consideration, analyzing the likelihood that that performance will be repeated. This second assessment is crucial for understanding how electoral accountability may break-down, because voters will only be willing to grant an incumbent a subsequent term in office if their assessment on both counts is positive. Not only does performance have to be good, voters must also believe it credibly signals a high likelihood of future good performance as well.

The study also highlights the importance of understanding how different types of accountability operate not in isolation, but how they interact. In particular, my findings suggest that re-election may be constrained in its ability to generate political accountability when other complementary institutions and mechanisms of accountability are weak. This points to the need to have a minimum set of accountability institutions in place for any one individual accountability types to work well. Overall, the findings also suggest the importance of the relatively un-addressed role of non-electoral oversight institutions on electoral accountability.

Relatedly, the project departs from the recent incumbency disadvantage literature in developing democracies (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik 2017; Uppal 2009), as in these studies, the incumbency disadvantage actually stems from incumbents performing poorly and being voted out of office, suggesting electoral accountability is actually working. The results also build on recent studies of voters with accurate performance information who appear to punish good performers (Adida et al. 2017a; Boas, Hidalgo, and Toral 2019; Bursztyn 2016; De Kadt and Lieberman 2017). However, in these cases, voters “punish” good policy performance in one domain because they would have preferred another. My findings therefore suggest a new type of case, as respondents punish incumbents who perform well in the very policies that they prioritize.

In a separate vein, the findings also contribute to our understanding of the political implications of party weakness. Recent scholarship has highlighted a number of potential effects of party decline, and my study adds another possible negative impact: making the electoral connection vulnerable to breakdown. Interestingly, the findings also suggest that horizontal accountability institutions may be able to absorb some of the accountability-related functions that political parties play in advanced democracies. Strong oversight institutions, then, may be able to substitute for parties

in these settings, to keep the electoral connection intact.

These contributions to the academic study of accountability are also made greater by my contention that, as I elaborate on further in the concluding chapter, the theory would reasonably extend to a number of other Latin American countries and beyond. Weak party systems are now the reality for many developing countries, particularly in Latin America (Lupu 2016; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring 2018; Seawright 2012). In these settings, weak oversight institutions and the resulting poor performance by politicians may create the conditions for a breakdown in the electoral connection.

Taking just the case of Latin America, Guatemala, Ecuador and Panama join Peru in having both weak institutions of oversight and frail party systems. These countries also have relatively low re-election rates compared to other countries in the region. In Peru, incumbent re-election was about 33% across the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections, and in Panama in 2019, it was 32% (Jiménez 2019). In Ecuador, mayors were re-elected 32% of the time in 2009, but the rate fell even further to only 22% in 2014 (Mejia Acosta and Meneses 2019). In Guatemala, incumbent re-election is the highest in the group at 41.2%, but evidence using a regression discontinuity design suggests an incumbency disadvantage similar in magnitude to that of Peru (Morales Carrera 2014).

Overall, then, other developing democracies with similarly weak oversight institutions and frail party systems may fall into an electoral dis-connection disequilibrium in which voters reject the very premise of re-election and ignore politicians' good performance when they make voting decisions. In response, politicians have little incentive to excel in office, potentially setting in motion a race to the bottom, with poor candidates increasingly running and even worse performance in office reinforcing voters' initial hunch to throw them all out.

1.5 Methodology

This project fits squarely in the comparative politics tradition of the subnational comparative method (Snyder 2001), using variation within, rather than across, countries. Though not an extensive focus, I also leverage temporal variation, assessing trends in political behavior across time. The universe of cases is every local government unit in the country. Peru is divided into 25 regions, 195 provinces and 1647 municipal districts, the latter of which is the focus of this study.⁹ For ease, I use the terms ‘district’ and ‘municipality’ interchangeably.

As a mixed-methods study, I make extensive use of both qualitative and quantitative data, including qualitative interviews in 6 municipalities across 3 regions, an original survey with a survey experiment fielded in 18 municipalities, and analysis of existing and original quantitative data sets with data covering every local government in Peru. Following Lieberman (2005), I fully integrated both quantitative and qualitative strategies: statistical analysis informed the selection of the case studies, results from the qualitative interviews informed the hypotheses I sought to test in the original survey I designed, and so on. This section describes each of the main components of the study in detail.

In terms of timing, the study is centered largely around the mayoral elections that took place in 2006, 2010 and 2014. The year 2000 was a turning point in Peruvian politics, marking the fall of authoritarian President Alberto Fujimori and the launching of a transitional period towards re-democratization. The first election that took place after the democratization process was in 2002, so the 2006 election

⁹ There are technically 1842 districts, however, following convention, I exclude from the study the 195 districts that are capitals of both provinces and municipalities, because the lines of accountability between the leader and voters are blurred between provincial and municipal responsibilities.

is the first time incumbents from the post-2000 transition could run for re-election. Thus 2006 is the first election for which I include electoral outcomes.¹⁰ I also include the two subsequent local elections, held in 2010 and 2014 respectively. The 2015 law banning mayoral election took effect beginning with the 2018 election, so that election serves as an upper bound on the study.

1.5.1 Existing and Original National-level Quantitative Data

I draw on existing national-level datasets covering electoral, administrative and census data, as well as existing surveys. Capitalizing on my presence in country, I filed Freedom of Information Requests to obtain government data, then constructed original datasets documenting citizen engagement in accountability efforts in between elections. I discuss each of these in turn.

For elections, I use data on vote shares, parties and candidates available from Peru’s National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* - JNE)¹¹ for the local elections included in the study.¹² Beginning in 2010, all candidates running for mayor are required to submit an *hoja de vida* to the National Elections Board which includes information like age, gender, education and past experience.¹³ I use this more comprehensive individual-level candidate data for the 2010 and 2014 elections.

I also make extensive use of a yearly national household survey (ENAH -

¹⁰ The regression discontinuity design, covered in Chapter 5, also uses the 2002 data to identify the candidates who ran and their voteshare, but I do not study outcomes of the 2002 election per se.

¹¹ Data available online: <https://infogob.jne.gob.pe>.

¹² Though the raw data is available publicly, I thank José Luis Incio for providing me with a cleaned dataset of all mayors who ran for and won re-election for the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections.

¹³ 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).

Encuesta Nacional de Hogares) carried out by Peru’s National Institute for Statistics and Information (INEI - *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática*).¹⁴ The underlying survey data is available online for every year beginning in 2004,¹⁵ and includes a range of relevant questions about politics, including satisfaction with local services and trust in government. The survey, a random sample of neighborhoods and of households within those neighborhoods, is fielded on a monthly basis, ranging from a little over 20,000 households annually in the early years to over 30,000 households by 2014.¹⁶ Its geographic scope is extensive, including every region and province, and while it does not sample from every municipality every year, the coverage is high. For the political variables I use in this project, between one third and one half of all municipalities are sampled in any given year. As my interest is in how political attitudes influence voting behavior, I use only data in the year of the local elections (2006, 2010 and 2014), and for the months prior to when the election is held. When I merge across the three elections years, I have observations from 1183 municipalities, or 72% of all districts.

I draw on other available data with national coverage, including public polling from survey firms, as well as metrics of politicians’ performance from various Peruvian government data sources. This includes data on budgeting and spending from the Ministry of Finance (*Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas*),¹⁷ statistics from Peru’s conditional cash transfer program (JUNTOS),¹⁸ as well as general indicators of eco-

¹⁴ <https://www.inei.gob.pe/>

¹⁵ Data available online at: http://inei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/Consulta_por_Encuesta.asp.

¹⁶ The number of households surveyed for each of the three years I use in this study are the following: 31,690 households in 2014; 22,640 households in 2010; 21,919 households in 2006.

¹⁷ Data available online at: <http://apps5.mineco.gob.pe/transparencia/Navegador/default.aspx>.

¹⁸ <https://www.juntos.gob.pe>

nomic and social development from the National Institute for Statistics and Information (INEI - *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática*).¹⁹ Data on municipal population and other socioeconomic characteristics comes largely from the 2007 census conducted by the INEI.²⁰

Finally, I constructed two original national-level data sets on social engagement in accountability outside of elections. The first measures the number of complaints per electoral cycle lodged with Peru’s Ombudsman (*Defensoría del Pueblo*) against the municipal government. By law, the *Defensoría* receives and investigates formal complaints lodged by citizens against public officials and government entities. Through a Freedom of Information Act request, I received the text of all citizen complaints to the *Defensoría* against district municipalities from 2008 (the first year available) to July 2016, including information about the complainant, the public sector institutions involved, geographic location and the *Defensoría*’s findings. The total dataset includes 32,707 citizen complaints.

Second, I constructed an original dataset of large-scale social conflict and mobilization related to municipal governance. Peru’s *Defensoría* tracks on a monthly basis what they refer to as *conflicto social*, meaning instances when protest moves from a one-off or peaceful event, to more sustained, ongoing mobilization that blocks normal functioning in the area where it occurs, requires external intervention, and often includes violence. Again through a Freedom of Information Act request, I received the *Defensoría*’s database of all social conflict, beginning in 2010 (the first year available), and relating to either local public affairs or elections at the level of the district municipality.

¹⁹ Data available at: http://iinei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/Consulta_por_Encuesta.asp.

²⁰ Data available online at: <http://ineidw.inei.gob.pe/ineidw/>.

1.5.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

The original data collected through qualitative fieldwork involved key informant interviews in two municipalities each in three different regions of the country. To select municipalities, the key comparative strategy I used was to identify municipalities within the same province,²¹ thereby holding geographic and socioeconomic variables largely constant, but with variation in the electoral connection between voters and local politicians. The purpose of the fieldwork at this stage was to find out if citizens and mayors exhibited different behaviors and attitudes between the two electoral connection district types (described below), in a first effort to build hypotheses to explain their divergent outcomes.

One large challenge in case selection was ensuring a sample of districts with adequate variation in the dependent variable. For one, I did not have an accurate measure of the electoral connection, nor of electoral accountability more broadly, prior to launching the project. Instead, I had an indicator of districts where the electoral connection seemed most likely to have broken down and an indicator of where it was most likely to still exist (I describe both of these in the following paragraphs). Furthermore, the number of districts in each group was small. All of this translated into a greater risk of having insufficient variation in the dependent variable when implementing the standard case selection strategy of selecting on independent variables. However, the prohibition on selecting on the dependent variable to avoid selection bias can be somewhat overcome by selecting on the full range of the dependent variable (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994), which is the strategy I chose.

On the one extreme of the dependent variable are municipalities in which it seems the electoral connection has completely broken down. An interesting Peruvian

²¹ Recall Peru's decentralization scheme divides the country into regions, provinces and districts.

anomaly makes identifying these types of municipalities possible. Recall that one condition for the electoral connection is that incumbents have to actually want to seek re-election. Yet in 129 districts, or about 8% of all districts nationwide, mayors chose not to run for re-election in a single election across the three election years. Furthermore, for the electoral connection to hold, mayors need a realistic chance of winning. However, in 136 districts, again about 8% of all districts nationwide, the incumbent ran for re-election but never won a single contest across the three elections. While it could be the case that the incumbent never ran or always lost because their performance was poor, this seems an unlikely explanation for why three different incumbents chose not to run, or ran and lost, in three consecutive elections. These 265 never-run or always-lose districts are therefore those with the strongest evidence for a breakdown in the electoral connection, and together they represent about 16% of all districts nationwide.

On the other extreme are municipalities which the data suggest are the most likely to have a strong electoral connection. In only about a quarter of Peru's districts—410 out of 1635—did mayors run for re-election every year across the three election years included in the study. These are the districts that most closely fit Mayhew's conception of incumbents always striving for re-election. Within this group, municipalities where the mayor won re-election at least once are those where the electoral connection most likely exists, with the mayor presumably being rewarded for her good performance in office, or at the very least, with voters being willing to consider granting re-election. With one exception, which I describe below, I operationalized the group of municipalities with an electoral connection as only including those in which an incumbent was re-elected in the most recent election (2014).

Conventionally, Peru is divided into three main geographic areas: the coast; the Andes mountains; and the Amazon rain forest. I chose one region each from

the coast (Arequipa) and the Andes (Cusco). The Amazon rain forest area has a much lower population, population density and transportation access, all reasons for which it was excluded from the study. Given the prevalence of internal migration from rural to urban centers throughout the country, I opted to include peri-urban and rural municipalities along the outskirts of the capital, Lima (part of the Lima region), which are largely composed of migrants and relative newcomers. I excluded municipalities within Lima itself as their extremely high population density and the political and economic centralization of the country make them less representative of the Peruvian population as a whole, and much more is already known about political behavior in these areas.

I was also concerned with picking municipalities that reflected the modal municipality's small population size. The population distribution across districts is heavily skewed: the median population is 3903, and about 80% (79.3%) of all districts have 10,000 inhabitants or less. For the qualitative interviews, I therefore excluded districts at the extremes of population size.²²

Table 1.1 shows the final selection of municipalities and their key characteristics. For the Lima and Cusco regions, I was able to identify one province that had municipalities at both electoral connection extremes. In both cases, the 'no electoral connection' cases were 'always lose' districts, again meaning that across the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections, the incumbent ran but lost re-election. The 'electoral connection' cases were those in which the incumbent ran and won in 2014. In Cusco, I include a municipality where the 2014 election was the first that the incumbent ran for and won. In the Lima region, the incumbent was on his third term in office, having been originally elected in 2006, then winning re-election in 2010 and 2014.

²² As I discuss below, I included urban, peri-urban and rural districts in the survey.

Table 1.1: Selection of Paired Municipalities

Region	Province	Municipality	Pop.	Rural	Poverty	Selection Criteria
Arequipa	Camaná	Samuel Pastor	13142	8.66%	33.50%	Incumbent re-elected 2010
		Ocoña	4540	21.06%	21.83%	Recall; Ran and lost 2006 and 2010
Cusco	Calca	Coya	3705	65.83%	76.09%	Incumbent re-elected 2014
		Taray	4275	88.56%	60.19%	Always lose
Lima	Huarochirí	San Andrés de Tupicocha	1423	50.46%	53.82%	Incumbent re-elected 2010 and 2014 (third term)
		San Bartolomé	1793	26.55%	21.77%	Always lose

In the case of Arequipa, I relaxed slightly the selection criteria because I wanted to include a municipality with a history of implementing recalls, a constitutionally-mandated policy through which citizens can petition to put the standing mayor up for a recall referendum before her term in office concludes. Recalls have become commonplace in Peruvian local politics. For example, in the period between the 2010 and 2014 elections, citizens initiated 1032 recalls; in 386 of those cases, they collected enough signatures to get the recall on the ballot; and 165 mayors were successfully removed (Holland and Incio 2018).²³ At the time of the interviews, a recall process had already been initiated in the district of Ocoña, which also held a recall in 2012, during the previous term, which the mayor won by an incredibly slim margin. The incumbent ran and lost in both 2006 and 2010, but did not run in 2014, so I considered this to be a variant of the ‘never run-always lose’ district. Within the same province, the district that best approximated the ‘electoral connection’ ideal was Samuel Pastor, where the incumbent ran and won re-election in 2010 (though they did not run in 2014, opting to end their time in office after 2 terms). I also

²³ A 2015 legal change, allowing recalled mayors to appoint their successor rather than holding new elections, reduced the use of the recall significantly (Holland and Incio 2018).

wanted to include Samuel Pastor because the mayor that won in 2014 was removed from office at the end of 2016 by the National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones*), and replaced by the Lieutenant Mayor, after a lengthy investigation process over corruption allegations which began when local citizens filed complaints. Though these types of investigations and removals are under the purview of the National Elections Board, in practice they are quite infrequent. It thus also represents an interesting case of citizen engagement in oversight as well as horizontal accountability institutions at work. Thus overall, I succeeded in both including municipalities with interesting accountability-related phenomenon (recalls, high citizen engagement and strong horizontal accountability), while also matching two municipalities from the same province but with different electoral connection outcomes.

In each municipality, I interviewed the mayor, municipal staff who are the most involved in interacting directly with citizens, and *regidores*, elected members of the town's council who by law play a role in oversight of the mayor, including both *regidores* from the mayor's party and from the opposition. On the civil society side, I interviewed leaders of both social service organizations and those that were more political in nature. Since each village, or *centro poblado*, elects a president and a *junta comunal* (name may vary) whose main job is to represent the village vis-à-vis the municipality and to preside over community affairs, I interviewed these community leaders as well. Structured interviews generated the following kinds of data: citizen and municipal staff attitudes about the expected roles and responsibilities of mayors, including what makes a 'good' mayor; citizen attitudes about re-election, accountability and who is responsible for overseeing mayors; engagement in non-electoral accountability efforts through both formal laws and informal practices; and access to information about mayoral performance and about candidates during campaigns.

1.5.3 Original Survey

The results of the qualitative interviews were instrumental in identifying gaps in the descriptive data available and elaborating testable hypotheses. Guided by the qualitative findings, then, the original survey aimed to both generate basic descriptive data about local-level political behavior as well as adjudicate between causal claims. Some of the main research questions that the survey was designed to answer include: How do Peruvians view re-election? How do voters evaluate and decide between incumbents and challengers? What do they perceive as mayors' main responsibilities? Do they believe past performance is a good indicator of future performance? Do they believe corruption is increasing across terms? Existing surveys, particularly outside of the capital, had never asked these kinds of detailed questions about citizens' views on accountability, re-elections and the citizen-state relationship at the local level. It was also the first conjoint survey experiment (described further below) to gauge voter preferences in mayoral re-elections carried out in Peru.

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, including creating and field-testing the instrument, hiring and training a team of 15 enumerators and supervising and trouble-shooting during implementation. I contracted out with the Peru country office of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to program the survey on the tablets, to rent the tablets and provide technical trouble shooting while in the field, and to use 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 because of the wide variety of districts across the different electoral accountability types I wanted to include in the stratification, described further below, which paralleled the qualitative case selection (‘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 and lodging complaints against the mayor with the Peruvian Ombudsmen, both of which were original datasets I constructed, 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 allowed me to control for sociopolitical, historical and geographic factors that likely vary across regions. Finally, I had already conducted qualitative fieldwork 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 in Cusco that are both provincial and district capitals, because these districts have only one mayor whose responsibilities 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 blurred 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.

Similarly to the qualitative study, to ensure variation 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 connection outcomes. The first two are the ‘never run’ and ‘always lose’ districts, again meaning those in which across the 2006, 2010 and 2014 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), the electoral connection is most likely to hold. The fourth strata of municipalities is composed of all those districts that are not included in the first three types. It thereby 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.

A conjoint experiment was embedded at the start of the survey in order to study voter preferences for incumbents and challengers within the context of re-elections. In this kind of survey experiment, respondents are shown two candidates and are asked to pick which one they would vote for to be mayor. The characteristics of the two candidates are randomly varied, then the choice between the two is analyzed

across all respondents to understand which candidate characteristics most impact vote choice. I designed my particular experiment so that one of the candidates was always the incumbent and one was always a challenger. A Pre-Analysis Plan for the conjoint experiment was registered with Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) prior to implementing the survey.²⁴ To my knowledge, this is the first conjoint experiment fielded in Peru to gauge voter preferences in re-elections.

In addition to the conjoint experiment, additional survey questions focused on the following: expectations of the mayor's main role and responsibilities; access to performance information across three performance indicators (public works; managing the budget; providing individual financial assistance to residents); attitudes about re-election and perceptions of community norms regarding voting and re-election; self-reported voting behavior in the most recent election; extent of monitoring and gift giving in mayoral campaigns; participation in formal and informal accountability efforts outside of elections; perceptions of actors or government agencies involved in pushing for accountability; political efficacy; and overall perception of the municipal government, including perceived level of corruption. The survey also included five socioeconomic questions: income; age; highest level of education; first language; and gender.

1.6 Plan of the Dissertation

To conclude, I present a brief road map of the manuscript. The following chapter outlines in detail the main argument of the project: in the absence of parties, weak oversight can cause a breakdown in the electoral connection.

Part I of the study documents the puzzle of Peru's electoral dis-connection.

²⁴ <http://egap.org/registration/2762>

Chapter 3 shows how the bias against incumbents has translated into low re-election rates and an incumbency disadvantage, and how voters even go so far as to prefer outlawing re-election rather than risking the chance that an incumbent wins a second term. Chapter 4 focuses on perhaps the most striking phenomenon of that dis-connection: voters prefer challengers even over incumbents who perform well in office.

Part II tackles the question of why the electoral connection has broken down. Chapter 5 tests the micro-foundations of the theory, documenting key voter attitudes—disdain for politicians, belief that learning on-the-job leads to better evasion of government controls, and a resulting skepticism of good performance being repeated—then provides evidence that these attitudes underpin the voter behavior that characterizes Peru’s electoral dis-connection.

Chapter 6 focuses on the role of weak oversight institutions, particularly in influencing voter attitudes as well as downstream voter behavior, in terms of both support for banning re-election and voter bias against incumbents. I also provide evidence that voter trust in oversight institutions provides a mechanism via which incumbents can begin to overcome the electoral handicap of holding office. Finally, I present results from tests of alternative explanations, which add additional support for my contention that the best explanation for the breakdown in the electoral connection is weak horizontal accountability.

As a conclusion to the project, Chapter 7 returns to the implications of the findings for our understanding of democratic accountability. It also considers how the theory might generalize to other settings and explores avenues for future research.

2 | A Theory of Electoral Dis-connection

Electoral accountability, or voters' ability to hold politicians accountable through re-election, is largely predicated on the existence of what Mayhew (1974) called the electoral connection: the link between voters and elected officials generated by the desire and ability of politicians to get re-elected to a subsequent term conditional on voters' assessment of their performance in office. In institutionalized party systems, political parties play a key role in maintaining the electoral connection, such as by generating loyalty to incumbents and providing an incentivizing function to ensure candidates on the party label perform well in office. In contrast, weak party systems may become vulnerable to a breakdown in the electoral connection.

The main argument advanced in this project is that when political parties are weak, effective oversight institutions become crucial for maintaining the electoral connection. In Latin America in particular, state weakness has been linked with poor public sector performance and weakened democracy and representation (Handlin 2017; Mainwaring 2006a). Building on this literature, I argue more explicitly that it is not state weakness overall, but the failure of the state to oversee politicians that matters. I contend that without strong parties, contexts where oversight institutions are weak may develop an electoral dis-connection, as ineffective oversight may make voters skeptical about the future performance of incumbents if re-elected. This effect is due to the role of weak oversight in causing voters to doubt both the intrinsic

motivation and external incentives of re-elected politicians, such that they assume good performance in office if re-elected is unlikely. As a consequence, voters may begin to question the benefits of re-election and even reject incumbents who perform well.

In terms of voter perceptions of intrinsic motivation, the impact of oversight institutions comes indirectly through the effect of weak sanctions on politicians' performance. Without effective sanctions, elected officials have less incentive to expend the effort to provide complex public policies and public services, and to do so without engaging in corruption. Ineffective government oversight thus creates the conditions for performance in office to be poor, due to either shirking or engaging in malfeasance. As voters observe increasingly poor performance by more and more elected officials, they may begin to question the intrinsic motivation of politicians overall. In the face of poor performance, voter disdain for politicians may translate into doubt about their motivation for entering office in the first place.

Questioning politicians' internal drive to perform well would not necessarily break the electoral connection if voters also believed that strong institutions of accountability could rein in politicians' worst impulses. However, for re-elected incumbents in particular, weak oversight has a direct effect on voters' assessment of their external incentive to perform in subsequent terms. Politicians everywhere are assumed to learn on the job, and this learning is typically associated with developing skills to perform better in office. However, learning on-the-job could have a negative effect on performance in the sense that incumbents learn how to more effectively shirk or engage in corruption without getting caught. Where oversight is weak, re-elected officials may be more likely to act on these new skills precisely because the risk of sanctions is low. In practical terms, being better able to circumvent oversight systems without being caught and punished, due to the combination of learning and lack of

effective sanctions, means politicians face less oversight. To the extent voters become aware of this dynamic of political learning and willingness to act on new skills, they perceive that in the second-term, re-elected incumbents will face even less external oversight of their performance than would challengers, who by default will be in their first term.

If voters believe re-elected incumbents lack both an internal drive and an external incentive to excel, then they may become skeptical of the likelihood of good performance in a subsequent term, even for incumbents who performed well in a first term. This doubt about performance if re-elected then leads to a set of voter behaviors indicative of an electoral dis-connection: anti-incumbent bias; a preference for challengers over incumbents, even those who perform well; and a rejection of the possibility of running for re-election overall.

This chapter develops my theoretical argument more fully. I start by outlining the ways political parties help maintain the electoral connection, in order to clarify how institutions of horizontal accountability become particularly important in contexts without strong parties. The remainder of the theory then focuses entirely on explaining settings where parties are weak. Figure 2.1 presents the main steps in the argument. Each of the sections in the chapter roughly correspond to one of the arrows in the figure. I begin by discussing how weak oversight institutions make poor performance in office more likely. Then I describe how the resulting poor performance causes voter disdain for politicians and a questioning of the intrinsic motivation of elected officials. I next discuss the direct effect of weak oversight institutions on political learning and on voters' perception that re-elected incumbents face even less external constraints on their behavior than newly elected challengers. I then describe how this combination of doubting intrinsic and external motivations generates skepticism about the potential performance of re-elected incumbents, breaking the link

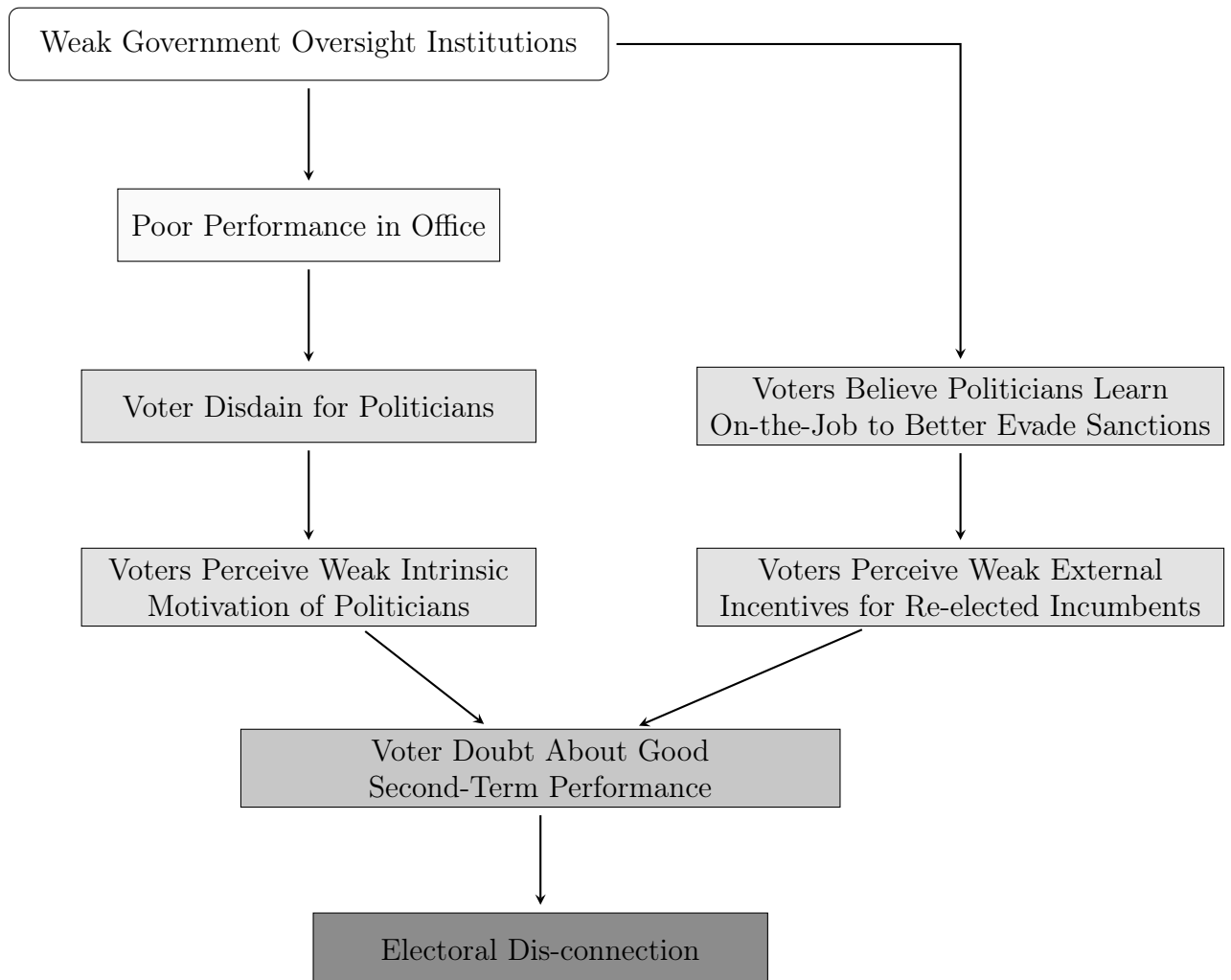


Figure 2.1: How Poor Oversight Generates an Electoral Dis-connection When Parties are Weak

between current and future performance, as voters doubt that incumbents who perform well will continue that good performance into the future. Finally, I discuss how doubts about second-term performance translate into the specific voter behavior that indicates a breakdown in the electoral connection.

After presenting the theory in detail, I conclude the chapter by comparing my theoretical argument with the two main competing approaches in the political science literature to predicting voter behavior and poor electoral accountability. I then outline the observable predictions of all three approaches that will be tested in the later empirical chapters.

2.1 Political Parties and the Electoral Connection

My argument offers an explanation for what can happen to electoral accountability when parties are weak. To do so, it is necessary to first outline the many ways that strong party systems help maintain the electoral connection between voters and politicians. This section describes how parties impact the electoral connection by increasing voter support for incumbents, both directly, through partisan loyalty and clientelistic exchange, and indirectly, by incentivizing politicians on their party ticket to perform well. To be clear, parties do not have a role to play in the rest of the theoretical argument or the voter behavior studied in this project. However, focusing on parties' function here is crucial in order to more fully understand what happens to the electoral connection when parties are weak.

Political parties have consistently played a central role in political science scholarship, and until relatively recently, the idea that all parties and all countries' party systems were strong was taken as a given. However, weak individual parties and frail party systems as a whole are now the reality for a number of developing

countries, particularly in Latin America (Lupu 2016; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring 2018; Seawright 2012). In these settings, parties come and go at each new election, voter support of any particular party swings wildly from election to election, politicians engage in frequent party switching, and parties may become personalistic vehicles of a single candidate, rather than centered on a stable policy platform.

Recent scholarship has highlighted a number of potential negative effects of party decline. If, as I argue in this section, strong parties play a role in maintaining the electoral connection, then another potential consequence of weak party systems is that they become susceptible to an electoral connection breakdown. Mayhew's (1974) notion of the electoral connection requires both that politicians seek re-election and that voters are willing to consider granting an incumbent a second term. Parties play a role in this latter condition, by ensuring that voters are willing to at least entertain the idea of re-electing the incumbent. Whether through more programmatic or personalistic politics, parties may both constrain politicians' behavior in office (diminishing the need for horizontal accountability institutions), and ensure support for incumbents independently of their performance.

Though not mutually exclusive categories, the mechanisms via which parties maintain the electoral connection differ depending on whether they are patronage-based or more programmatic parties. Particularly in developing countries, personalistic or patronage-based parties are often key to organizing the kinds of particularistic benefits that keep voters loyal to incumbents. Thick political organization more broadly means more and more voters can be targeted with goods and assistance, generating support for the incumbent over challengers, who have no track record of providing such benefits.

Whether it be through funneling cash, gifts, patronage or pork, parties ensure voter support for their incumbent candidate. A long literature has focused on how

parties use their organizational infrastructure for the kinds of clientelistic exchange that secures continued success at the ballot box (see, e.g., Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2014; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Nichter 2014; Stokes et al. 2013). Within Latin America, countries like Mexico and Argentina have been a particular focus of the scholarly work on clientelism given the presence of strong party organizations (see, e.g., Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni 2016; Stokes 2005).

Models of electoral clientelism are predicated on the existence of strong networks because they enable the kind of monitoring necessary to ensure voters cast their ballots according to the contingent exchange.¹ Whether the secret ballot is violated (or voters believe that it is), or machines merely monitor turnout or aggregate voteshares to infer about individuals' voting, monitoring is key. Regardless of the mechanism, monitoring requires strong organizations with long-term, ongoing exchanges that themselves generate an electoral connection between politicians and voters. Weak parties simply cannot maintain enough clientelistic exchange to get their incumbent candidates re-elected. In some cases, individual candidates can establish a political machine outside of a party by building a personalized following, but this still requires a dense organizational network of supporters able to identify voters to target and then channel benefits.

Overall, patronage-based, clientelistic or personalistic parties keep the electoral connection strong by using targeted benefits to secure loyalty to incumbents, thereby preventing an electoral dis-connection in which voters become unwilling to grant incumbents a second term. Of course, there is a normative difference between voting for the incumbent because of satisfaction with the particularistic benefits received and feeling somehow coerced into supporting the incumbent. I bracket that

¹ See Muñoz (2019) for an excellent review of this point.

important normative question, and make the point that both cases prevent the development of an electoral dis-connection characterized by an unwillingness to vote for incumbent re-election.

Both patronage-based and programmatic parties may also secure support for incumbents simply through the strength of partisan attachments. Partisanship may link politicians to voters even outside of performance, to the extent partisan loyalty trumps incumbent poor performance.² This mechanism is implicit in Lupu's (2016) account of party decline; as voter loyalty to the party brand decreases, voters become more willing to sanction the party's politicians for poor performance. Partisanship may also insulate poor performing incumbents from sanctioning to the extent party loyalty flavors voters' evaluation of performance and the way they attribute blame (Brown 2010; Lyons and Jaeger 2014; Malhotra and Kuo 2008; Tilley and Hobolt 2011). Though undercutting performance-based voting, partisan loyalty does at least prevent voters from tending towards rejecting incumbents on the whole.

Another set of mechanisms has to do with incentivizing politicians' behavior in office, thereby indirectly drumming up support for incumbents, and these may apply to both personalistic and programmatic parties alike. First, though perhaps less common among Latin American party systems, strong parties can create their own incentives for good performance, outside of government oversight institutions. When parties are strong, in particular when they are stable, have been in existence for some time, are expected to be electorally viable in the future, and party switching is rare, candidates have an interest in performing well to continue to run with the party. Examples abound of parties punishing poor performing members, for example by blocking members of congress from serving on prestigious committees or taking up

² This issue is also discussed further below, as one of the two standard accounts of when electoral accountability fails.

ministerial posts. For mayors, party control over their behavior may be particularly strong when parties are competitive in both local and national races, giving politicians an incentive to perform well in local office to secure a chance to move up the ladder within the party. In this way, parties may even be substituting for horizontal accountability institutions in constraining politicians' performance in office.

The argument that strong parties give incumbents an incentive to perform well, even when government oversight is weak, seems to hold up empirically, such as in Klařna and Titunik's (2017) study in Brazil, where a two-term limit for mayors makes electoral accountability after the second term impossible.³ They find that only a strong, programmatic party with high party discipline, the Workers Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*), succeeds in keeping lame duck mayors in line. In contrast, in weak parties with high party switching, the hope of running with the party in the future was not a realistic or attractive enough possibility to constrain incumbents' behavior.

Second, parties give voters the chance to express dissatisfaction and secure changes in policy during their candidates' term in office, as party members could go to their party to lodge complaints, seek redress or push for change (Przeworski 2006). This may be especially important if voters begin to question whether an incumbent will continue to perform well in a second term. Voter concern about the likelihood of continued performance may be attenuated if they know they can successfully lobby the party to intervene if they grow unhappy with the incumbent's performance after being re-elected. Broadly, this also gives voters another way of trusting that the party will act as a check on the behavior of politicians that run on the party line.

Third, weak party systems make it difficult for voters to attribute blame,

³ In Brazil, there is variation in the strength of individual parties, as opposed to countries like Peru in which all parties are considered weak.

thus further disincentivizing good incumbent behavior, and empirical work suggests this may be particularly true for sanctioning corrupt incumbents (Schleiter and Voznaya 2018). If the incumbent switches parties for her re-election contest, it is not entirely clear if voters should punish the incumbent's old party or the new one. If the incumbent failed to implement their party's platform in their first term, but then switches to a new party, again there is no clear cut answer as to how voters should interpret the likelihood the incumbent will implement the new party's platform if granted a second term. To the extent they make it easier to incorrectly attribute blame, weak parties enable incumbents to escape the electoral pressure to perform well, thus disincentivizing good performance overall.

Whether through patronage or more programmatic policy-making, parties are a dominant means of organizing politics, structuring both incumbents' behavior in office and voters' responses to that behavior. In strong party systems, the electoral connection is significantly impacted by partisanship and the strength of political organization. Yet across the world, many contemporary democracies are characterized as cases of party collapse. What happens to the electoral connection, and thus to electoral accountability more broadly, when parties and partisan attachments are weak? Without partisan loyalty, clientelism or parties' ability to incentivize politicians to perform well, how can incumbents convince voters to give them a second chance in office? The rest of this chapter presents my theoretical answer to these questions.

2.2 The Effect of Oversight Institutions on Politicians' Performance

The core of my argument is a theory about voter behavior in re-elections in settings where parties are weak. I explain how voters decide between the incumbent and challengers, and how that decision-making ultimately weakens their ability to hold their elected officials accountable. Existing theories of electoral accountability assume voters are both willing to entertain the idea of voting for the incumbent and to use incumbent performance as input, to some extent at least, in their vote-choice in re-elections. Weak oversight institutions, I contend, makes it so neither of these assumptions hold.

Broadly speaking, I argue that, in the absence of parties, weak horizontal accountability institutions undercut the electoral connection by making voters skeptical about the likelihood incumbents will perform well in a subsequent term if re-elected. The first step in my theoretical argument, and the focus of this section, is that strong oversight plays a key role in deterring poor performance. This is represented by the first arrow on the left-hand side of Figure 2.1. The following step, discussed in more detail in the following section, assesses how poor performance, made more likely by weak oversight, undercuts the electoral connection by shaping voters' perceptions of politicians' intrinsic motivation to perform (the next arrow in the figure).

By "good performance," I mean simply acting in office the way voters want. This could mean, for example, by not being corrupt, or by not shirking, meaning expending effort to offer the policies, public goods or particularistic benefits that voters desire. Of course, many factors can lead to poor performance, including low capacity, short time horizons, or insufficient public budgets. The focus here is on the

“extra” poor performance induced by a lack of effective oversight.

Where the vertical accountability of elections is a form of external, non-government control, horizontal accountability refers to state oversight that comes from within. Scholars of American politics of course know the checks and balance system outlined in founding documents like the Federalist Papers. In addition to “balancing” institutions like those in the checks and balance system, “appointed” horizontal accountability institutions are specific government organizations given the autonomy to oversee other state agencies, like Ombudsmen, Supreme Auditing Institutions or special prosecutors (O’Donnell 1998). The checks and balance system focuses more on preventing overreach or misconduct of an entire branch of government, which is why O’Donnell called them “blunt instruments” of accountability (2006, pg. 338), and noted that appointed agencies emerged specifically to address this limitation. The theory I present here focuses on these appointed agencies, as well as the judiciary, rather than the system of checks and balances, because of the role these institutions play in overseeing individual politicians’ performance in office.

Furthermore, the argument builds on insights from the work on institutional strength (Brinks, Levitsky, and Murillo 2019; Levitsky and Murillo 2009), in that it is not enough for oversight institutions to exist on paper; to be effective, they must actually work in practice. While nearly all democracies have horizontal oversight institutions, there is strong variation in their effectiveness, both between and within countries.

In many low- and middle-income countries, decentralization created a common set of appointed horizontal accountability institutions. Using the example of Peru, the Ombudsmen (*Defensoría del Pueblo*) investigates governments’ compliance with their various legal requirements, including by accepting direct complaints from citizens. They also conduct outreach and educational campaigns, in-person and

through the media, to educate citizens about their rights in terms of accessing health and education services, labor laws, transparency, the illegality of vote buying, and so on. The Office of the Comptroller General, or the country's independent Supreme Audit Institution (*Contraloría General de la República*), oversees public spending, conducts audits of other government agencies, and can sanction for misconduct as well as send cases to the judiciary for formal prosecution. The *Contraloría* also accepts and investigates citizen complaints about corruption and irregularities in spending. Reflecting the extent of the problem of corruption, a range of other horizontal accountability institutions focus specifically on malfeasance. The Public Prosecutor's Office (*Fiscalía*) has a set of Specialized Prosecutors for Crimes of Corruption of Public Officials and accepts direct complaints from citizens. The Anti-Corruption Prosecutor of the Attorney General (*Procuraduría Pública Especializada en Delitos de Corrupción*) aims to secure monetary reparations in corruption cases and also manages a citizen complaint system.

The main way these oversight agencies incentivize good performance is through their ability to sanction bad performance. Implicit in the entire purpose of oversight is that without it, politicians—like people in general—may succumb to temptation and shirk. There is some debate in the literature about the role of norms versus sanctions in impinging on behavior, in the sense that high corruption environments may make politicians more likely to engage in corruption, regardless of sanctions. A famous study of parking tickets among United Nations officials in New York city found that diplomats from high corruption countries were particularly want to ignore parking rules, suggesting that norms were a powerful deterrent among diplomats from low corruption countries; however, a drive for strict enforcement with credible punishment yielded high compliance with the rules even among those who had shirked before the crackdown (Fisman and Miguel 2007). Thus sanctions may be particularly

important when norms of good behavior in elected office are weak.

In addition, limited sanctions for poor performance, or indeed, for not doing much in office at all, makes it easier for candidates to make campaign promises to get themselves elected, but then not deliver on those commitments once in office. The possibility of engaging in corruption, aggravated by lack of sanctions, also likely draws worse and worse candidates to run, which may translate into worse performance independent of weak sanctions.

Many horizontal accountability institutions can directly sanction politicians' behavior. The judicial branch and public prosecutors can exact criminal sanctions, while other oversight agencies may levy fines or otherwise impinge on public officials' behavior, such as election commissions preventing politicians from running for office if they have been found guilty of corruption.

Not all oversight institutions have the direct ability to sanction, though they still play a role in fostering oversight overall. They may generate information about performance that enables sanctioning agencies to more effectively enforce behavior. For example, some horizontal accountability institutions carry out investigations of politicians' conduct which are then turned over to the judicial branch for prosecution. Many also widely publicize the results of their investigations, capitalizing on the soft power of the media to sanction behavior. Indeed, a strong and independent media sector and a tradition of watchdog journalism is often considered a key complementary component of horizontal accountability (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006). Overall, these multiple roles suggest how distinct horizontal accountability institutions working together increase the system's effectiveness in constraining politicians' behavior. Often one horizontal accountability agency relies on the web of other accountability institutions in order to be effective (Kenney 2003; O'Donnell 2006).

Scholarly work has shown that even in weak institutional environments, mon-

itoring initiatives undertaken by individual oversight institutions can in fact succeed in incentivizing politicians and bureaucrats to perform well, particularly in terms of reducing corruption. Olken (2007) examined corruption in village-level road projects in Indonesia, and found that the impact of increased horizontal accountability—by randomly informing village leaders that public spending on the road project would be audited by the central government—decreased objective measures of corruption in the projects.⁴ Similarly, evidence from a field experiment in Peru suggests being monitored by the Supreme Auditing Institution 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). Focusing on bureaucrats, an anti-corruption drive in public hospitals in Buenos Aires was successful in reducing corruption that had been occurring by manipulating prices paid for inputs (Di Tella and Schargrotsky 2003). And a field experiment in a large Mexican city showed how being informed both of being audited and, importantly, that the results of the audit would be turned over to a sanctioning agency, resulted in bureaucrats being more diligent in evaluating building permit applications and reporting violations (Lagunes 2019).

Importantly, effective oversight can even work to incentivize mayors to perform in the absence of electoral accountability. Using the results of randomized audits as a measure of Brazilian mayors' level of corruption, Ferraz and Finan (2011) find that first-term mayors, meaning those who face re-election, are significantly less corrupt than those in their second term and who therefore cannot be re-elected under Brazil's two-term limit. However, when municipalities have more effective oversight

⁴ He also found that the decline was slightly larger in villages in which the leader was up for re-election, suggesting that horizontal and electoral accountability can work together by increasing the potential punishment perceived by politicians.

because they have a public prosecutor and local radio, second-term mayors, meaning those with no re-election incentives, performed the same as their first-term counterparts in terms of not engaging in corruption.

Overall, then, there is compelling evidence from a range of countries that strong oversight can induce improved politician performance, suggesting that the opposite—weak oversight yields poor performance—is also true. In the next section, I elaborate on how the poor performance made more likely by weak horizontal accountability impacts voter attitudes in ways that sever the electoral connection.

2.3 How Weak Oversight Impacts Voter Perceptions of Likely Second-term Performance

Weak horizontal accountability, and the poor performance that it tends to generate, have an important impact on how voters perceive the likelihood that re-elected incumbents will perform well in a second term if given a chance. Corresponding to the arrows in the middle of Figure 2.1, in this section, I argue, first, that the poor performance induced by weak oversight causes voters to question the intrinsic motivation of politicians. Second, for incumbents in particular, weak oversight yields voter skepticism about external constraints on their behavior if re-elected, due to learning on the job in their first term about how to circumvent governmental controls. Finally, I discuss how voters' doubts about re-elected politicians' internal motivation and external constraint translates into the kinds of voter behavior that suggest a breakdown in the electoral connection, namely a preference for challengers over incumbents, even those who perform well, and support for banning re-election overall.

2.3.1 Voter Assessments of Politicians' Internal Motivation

This section focuses on my argument that poor performance in office influences how voters characterize politicians' internal drive to perform. To flesh out this step in the theory, I first build on existing accounts of how voters evaluate incumbents and challengers in re-elections more broadly. In particular, my theory begins with a qualification to Fearon's (1999) selection model, in which voters assess candidates in order to identify and elect "good types", meaning politicians that will implement 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. As a consequence, standard accountability models (e.g., Fearon 1999; Svobik 2013) assume continuity of type across terms.

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 contexts, 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. But is this always the case? When would we expect current performance to become de-coupled from future performance?

To answer this question, we can think about why current performance is usually assumed to accurately predict future performance. One reason may be that strong performers are inherently good people: they are doing a good job in office because of a sense of public service, vocation, commitment to their community, and so on. That inherent goodness should not change, or not change much, across terms, such that a good performer in one term will continue to be a good performer in the next. Another explanation may be that, outside of their own intrinsic motivations, politicians' incentive to perform well—due to possible sanctions from the government, voters or their party—is not only strong but largely constant across terms. Institutions are effective enough to keep politicians in line, whatever term they are in.

I argue that weak systems of governmental oversight make it so that voters are skeptical about *both* of these explanations for the continuity of good performance: politicians as inherently good people, and as having sufficient external incentives in place to ensure they perform well. In terms of intrinsic motivation, the reason weak oversight matters was explored in-depth in the previous section: ineffective sanctions make it difficult to prevent politicians from performing poorly. As voters continue to perceive poor performance by incumbents, their belief in the inherent goodness of candidates who seek office is undercut (Svolik 2013).

If strong performance is no longer attributed to the inherent goodness of politicians, the only remaining explanation for good behavior is incentives to perform. However, as I argue in the following section, weak systems of oversight actually make it so politicians perceive even lower constraints on their behavior in their second term, because they have learned how to more easily engage in shirking or malfeasance without getting caught. Armed with greater skills to avoid detection, their perceived

risk of sanctioning drops relative to that of newly elected challengers in their first term.

Indeed, voter disdain for politicians on its own is not enough, I argue, to generate an electoral dis-connection.⁵ In the face of widespread poor performance in office, voters are likely to infer that both challengers and incumbents alike lack vocation to serve, thus making voters indifferent between them. Instead, it is the combination of voter questioning of intrinsic motivation of all politicians, and the belief that re-elected incumbents in particular face lower constraints on their behavior than challengers, that pushes voters to reject incumbents and re-election on the whole.

2.3.2 On-the-job Learning and Weak Oversight in a Second Term

The reason why oversight is even weaker for re-elected incumbents than for first-term challengers hinges on political learning. Where oversight is ineffective, re-elected politicians can not only learn how to circumvent systems of detection in their first term, but they perceive little risk of sanctions for acting on their new knowledge, giving them even less external constraint on their behavior in a second term than in their first. As a result, ineffective horizontal accountability can generate a belief among voters that poor performance and corruption are increasing across terms, thus leading, I argue, to voting behavior that suggests an electoral dis-connection.

In general, we tend to believe that elected officials, like any other worker, learn on the job. Typically this learning is seen as positive. In addition to its role in incentivizing behavior, those in favor of re-election often argue that elected officials

⁵ Nor is voter disdain a problem per se when oversight institutions are strong. In fact, skepticism of politicians coupled with trust in institutions of accountability to keep them in line may actually be a hallmark of healthy democracies (Cleary and Stokes 2006).

increasingly perform well the longer they hold office. Politicians learn how bureaucracies operate, making them more efficient at navigating red tape to get the job done. They develop political skills, such as mediating between competing interests and communicating about their activities. They foster connections with other politicians and members of the community that make it easier to do their jobs.

However, where oversight is weak, that learning can take on a more sinister hue, with empirical research on corruption in particular suggesting it may be easier to engage in malfeasance the longer an elected official is in office (Coviello and Gagliarducci 2017; Fisman, Schulz, and Vig 2014; Klašnja 2015). As politicians learn more about the systems in place to detect corruption, such as in reporting requirements, budgeting procedures and public procurements, they become better able to circumvent them. Furthermore, relationship building means developing networks of collusion, both in government and the business community, which can make engaging in corruption even easier. Longer time in office allows for identifying willing partners, and repeated contact with these co-conspirators strengthens ties and reduces the risk of defection.

Learning on the job is not only about corruption, but more broadly may also involve becoming better able to shirk. Implementing complex public policies takes time and effort that politicians may not want to expend. Greater time in office can help elected officials learn how to mask their under-exertion of effort. For example, they may learn how to spend money on smaller initiatives rather than complex endeavors, so that a pot of unspent public monies at the end of their term does not expose their minimal effort.

Of course, this kind of learning on-the-job about how to circumvent systems of control can happen anywhere. But weak oversight institutions make it particularly the case that voters believe political learning leads to worse, rather than better,

performance. The reason is simple: weak oversight changes politicians' calculus about the risks to acting on their new knowledge. Increased skill plus a low risk of being sanctioned makes the draw of malfeasance and shirking even higher. In countries with high sanctions, re-elected politicians may have a better idea of how to avoid getting caught than challengers, but still be unwilling to take the risk of engaging in misconduct. Furthermore, voters are more likely to believe incumbents would act on their new knowledge in contexts of weak accountability, precisely because of their increased skepticism of the inherent goodness of any politician, as the previous section argued. Thus voters in contexts of weak oversight may be especially want to believe re-elected incumbents will succumb to the temptation to be corrupt or shirk by capitalizing on their new skill set.

Figure 2.2 depicts this intuition. In settings where horizontal accountability is strong, as shown in the top half of the diagram, learning on the job can translate into improved performance in a second term if incumbents are re-elected. In contrast, weak oversight can pervert the skills learned in office, enabling incumbents to be better able to shirk and engage in malfeasance in their second term compared to their first, resulting in worse performance.

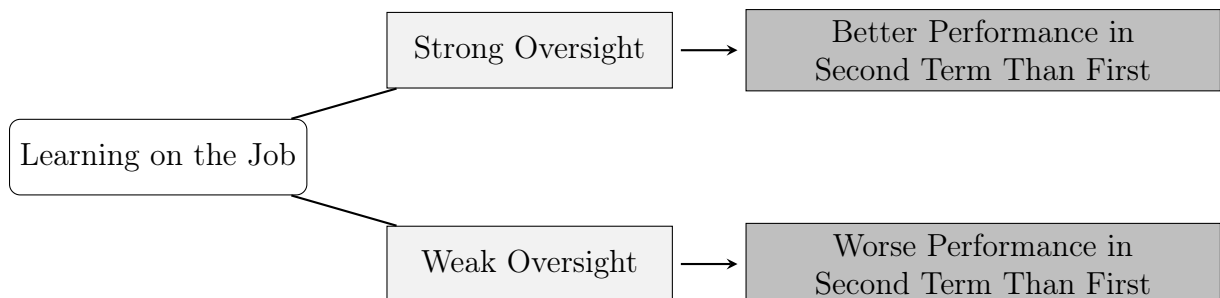


Figure 2.2: Impact of Oversight on the Performance Effects of Political Learning

The learning curve also becomes particularly steep the more than politicians are inexperienced, making the difference in potential corruption or shirking between a first and second term particularly high. A newly elected incumbent who has served as an elected official in some other capacity has already learned on the job, whereas a complete outsider has the greatest scope for increasing their knowledge and skills between terms. Thus contexts lacking a professional class of politicians might be particularly likely to suffer the ill-effects of on-the-job learning.

Focusing on corruption in particular, evidence from contexts of weak oversight provides strong support for the notion that politicians learn on the job and thus corruption is increasing across terms. One set of papers assess corruption by studying changes in elected officials' wealth over time. In Romania, mayors who narrowly-won re-election accumulated wealth faster during their term in office than narrowly-winning first-term mayors, and barely-winning multi-term incumbents accumulated wealth more rapidly than barely-winning incumbents in their first re-election (Klašnja 2015). Each of these findings provide strong support for the perverse impacts of learning on-the-job when oversight is weak.

Similarly, in state-level office in India, narrowly-winning incumbents accumulated more wealth than narrowly-winning first-term politicians (Fisman, Schulz, and Vig 2014). Complementary findings suggest the growth in politicians' assets are due to rent-seeking: in regions with worse corruption indicators, the assets of incumbents rose faster. And at the ministerial level, the asset growth was even higher, providing suggestive evidence that more wealth accumulation occurs where the possibilities of rent-seeking are greater due to higher budgets.

Research on public procurements also suggests another avenue via which incumbents can engage in more corruption overtime. 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). Public works projects in municipalities with narrowly-elected second-term mayors had lower numbers of bidders and higher overall cost, and there was a greater likelihood that the same firm was awarded multiple contracts.

There is therefore strong evidence from other contexts of weak oversight to suggest that re-elected incumbents take advantage of the knowledge they gained during their first term about circumventing governmental controls, resulting in worse performance in the second term. In such contexts, political learning effectively reduces the constraints on their behavior, as their risk of getting caught is lowered, just as it would be if oversight systems had suddenly become less effective.

As a result, voters who, as I have already argued, question the intrinsic motivation of politicians in general, now have reason to doubt the external constraints on re-elected politicians in particular. Svulik's (2013) notion of "normal types" is especially relevant here to understand how voters perceive re-elected incumbents' motivations and incentives. For Svulik, normal type politicians are not inherently bad, like bad types, nor are they driven by intrinsic motivation, like good types. Instead, normal types can be induced to behave as good types if their incentive to perform is strong enough. In a context of generally poor performance, voters may be particularly likely to view the occasional good performing incumbent not as a good type, but as a normal type; these infrequent good performers did so not because of a drive to contribute to the community, but because they were incentivized to perform, either to seek re-election or because they did not yet know how to bypass governmental controls. Learning on the job, however, means that, if re-elected, these normal type politicians will have even less of an incentive to perform because their risk of sanctions is lower than it was in their first term. A rational voter, then, would be ill-inclined to reward such a good performing incumbent with a second term in office.

In contexts of weak oversight, and where voters tend to distrust politicians, good types face difficulty in credibly signaling that they are in fact good types, rather than normal types. As a result, voters are less likely to be swayed by positive information about incumbent behavior, choosing instead to select a challenger even over strong performers.

2.3.3 Doubting Second-term Performance and the Development of an Electoral dis-connection

So far in this chapter, I have outlined how weak systems of horizontal accountability lead voters to have doubts about the potential performance of incumbents if re-elected. Importantly, it is that doubt about incumbents' future performance that precipitates the break-down in the electoral connection (a contention depicted visually as the final arrow at the bottom of Figure 2.1).

As I argued, weak oversight, and the poor performance it tends to permit, leads to voter skepticism about the intrinsic motivation of politicians. On its own, though, this is not enough to generate an electoral dis-connection, as distrust and disdain are perceived of both challengers and incumbents alike. However, weak oversight makes it so that voters come to doubt re-elected incumbents' external incentives as well. Learning on the job in contexts of weak oversight causes voters to perceive that re-elected incumbents will, given the low risk of sanctions generated by weak accountability itself, act on their new knowledge of subverting governmental controls to perform even worse in a second term relative to newly elected challengers. The result is that voters tend to prefer challengers, 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 re-elected incumbent (Klašnja 2015, 2016).

Importantly, this voter preference for challengers holds for good and bad performing incumbents alike. In contexts of weak accountability and high disdain for politicians, voters likely see good performance not as indicating a politician who is a good type, but rather a normal type, one who only performed well because of externally-imposed constraints. The fact that those external constraints will be lower in a second term leads voters to conclude that even incumbents who performed well in a first-term are unlikely to perform well in a second. Information about incumbents' first-term performance therefore becomes no longer useful for inferring future performance. As a result, voters not only tend toward preferring challengers in general, but they do so even over incumbents who appeared to perform well.

Outsider challengers with no experience in office may also become preferred over challengers with previous experience governing. Experienced politicians will have already learned how to circumvent governmental controls in their previous time in office, even if at a different level of government or role. As a result, outsider challengers with no political experience will become preferred to insider challengers, all else equal.

At the extreme, voters may so disdain the idea of an incumbent winning a subsequent term in office that they may want to make it impossible for incumbents to run in the first place. If voters are so convinced second-term performance will be worse than first-term, even among incumbents who appear to perform well, then they might prefer to outlaw re-election entirely, rather than taking a chance on an incumbent managing to win re-election.

Together, a rejection of incumbents, the inability of good performance to help incumbents overcome voter disdain, and a desire to eliminate the legal right to run for re-election reflect a complete breakdown of the electoral connection. Significantly, the end result is also a weakening of voters' ability to use their electoral power to incentivize politicians to perform. As the argument I presented in this chapter sug-

gests, weak horizontal oversight makes this result more likely, in contexts where party system collapse makes the electoral connection vulnerable to breakdown.

2.4 Adjudicating Between Competing Accounts of Voting Behavior in Re-Elections

To further flesh out and provide support for my argument, I now turn to contrasting my theory with two other approaches to understanding voting behavior. A vast array of political science literature studies when and why individuals vote the way they do. A sub-set of this work considers the question of how voters sanction incumbents, either as the sole focus of the research, or by including incumbent performance as one factor among many which determines vote choice. Within this large body of empirical research, I describe here the two most common models of voter behavior that offer explanations for why electoral accountability may fail in practice. These two models provide important counter-approaches that I use to contrast with my own findings of an electoral dis-connection. These are not necessarily alternative explanations, but more principally, are alternative approaches to understanding voting behavior that I show do not explain the case of Peru, thus lending credence to my account of voting in re-elections. After discussing each of the two approaches below, I then outline the observable implications—to be tested in the later empirical chapters—of these accounts and my own, allowing me to highlight the puzzle of the electoral dis-connection as well as provide support for my theoretical argument for why it exists.

2.4.1 Standard Accounts of Failed Electoral Accountability

Despite the seeming simplicity of the premise that voters can control their elected officials' behavior through the carrot and stick of re-election, the reality of how that takes place on the ground is more complex. Particularly in lower income countries, where governance challenges like corruption and poor public service provision are more salient, empirical research focuses mostly on improving electoral accountability by understanding why it is not working. Standard political science accounts tend to explain failures in electoral accountability in terms of one of two problems: constraints on access to and use of information about incumbent performance; and voter prioritizing of identity—partisan, ethnic or otherwise—over sanctioning incumbent performance. I discuss each of these two approaches before contrasting them with my own.

Since 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), it is not surprising that so much political science research on the topic focuses on information. Much of this work argues that lack of access to information about how the incumbent performed in office is what causes electoral sanctioning to fail. This contention has been tested empirically by studying the impact of increased performance information on voter sanctioning, such as through randomized release of corruption audits or field experiments that manipulate access to other types of performance information (see the set of studies published in Dunning et al. 2019, as well as Banerjee et al. 2011; Bobonis, Cámara Fuertes, and Schwabe 2016; Chong et al. 2015; Ferraz and Finan 2008; Gottlieb 2016; De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2012; Larreguy, Marshall, and Snyder Jr 2019).

Other studies offer qualifications to the information hypothesis, suggesting

that it is not only access to information that matters, but how voters make use of and respond to that information in ways that may or may not lead to sanctioning. For example, research has shown how voters are unable to effectively use performance information because they make mistakes in attributing blame, either across levels of government (Gélineau and Remmer 2006; Sances 2017) or between bureaucrats and elected officials (Martin and Raffler Forthcoming). Other scholarship considers how the impact of information depends on how voters judge the new information relative to their prior beliefs. If voters already believed politicians were corrupt, then informing them about incumbent malfeasance would not necessarily lead to voter sanctioning (Arias et al. 2019; Bhandari, Larreguy, and Marshall 2019), and may even lead voters to withdraw from the political process altogether (Chong et al. 2015). Overall, regardless of the particular way information is constrained, the implication across all of these accounts is that alleviating that constraint will lead voters to hold their politicians accountable through re-election.

A second approach to voting behavior in re-elections argues that what undercuts electoral sanctioning is voters placing a greater weight on issues of identity over incumbent performance. One common example is the strength of partisanship. As a range of theoretical and empirical work on partisanship suggests (Asunka 2016; Besley 2006; Eggers et al. 2014; Kayser and Wlezien 2011), even with perfect performance information, partisan loyalty may mean voters overlook the bad performance of incumbents from their party and reward them with re-election anyway. Or they may ignore the good performance of incumbents from opposing parties, preferring the co-partisan challenger.

Ethnic voting is another example of identity-based voting that largely works through the same mechanism. Research suggests voters may be less willing to punish co-ethnics or to reward non-co-ethnics, such that ethnicity may undercut the impact

of incumbent performance on vote choice (Adida et al. 2017b; Carlson 2015). In the case of voter support of ethnic parties, partisan and ethnic identities overlap, likely re-enforcing the primacy of these identities over incumbent performance.

One strand of this research unites the identity and information approaches in that it considers the way that identity conditions how voters understand information. For example, partisanship may flavor voters' interpretation of performance and who is to blame, in the sense that voters' evaluate co-partisan performance differently than the performance of politicians from the opposing party (Brown 2010; Lyons and Jaeger 2014; Malhotra and Kuo 2008; Tilley and Hobolt 2011). This research, however, still falls squarely in the identity voting model, since the principal motivation of voters continues to be identity, rather than in the first approach, which presumes voters' desire to sanction is the prime determinant of their vote choice.

While the first approach, or the information constraint hypothesis, is an alternative explanation that could apply to the case of Peru, identity-based voting would not be expected to explain the breakdown in the electoral dis-connection. Partisan loyalty as a basis for voting is simply not relevant in Peru given the collapse of the party system (Levitsky 2018b; Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Seawright 2012; Tanaka 2006). Nor is ethnic voting considered to be prominent. Unlike in other Latin American countries with large indigenous populations, there has been limited organizing around indigenous identity either among civil society groups or political parties (Paredes 2011; Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005). In Presidential races starting in the 1990s, and particularly in the 2000s, there has tended to be large differences in vote share between majority indigenous areas and non-indigenous areas (Madrid 2011). However, this has not translated into ethnic voting in regional or local races.

Still, as a key approach to voting that has been found to apply in other contexts, I use identity-based voting as a point of comparison to illustrate how a

different type of electoral behavior has taken root in Peru. In other words, I compare the predicted expectations in terms of attitudes and voting behavior between my approach and the two others to provide support for the idea that the electoral disconnection I describe is a new type of political outcome, characterized by attitudes and behaviors that would not be expected to occur if the tenets of the other approaches held. In the case of the information constraint model, I also use the comparison to reject information as an alternative hypothesis, thereby providing additional support for my own theory of why the electoral connection has broken down.

2.4.2 Testable Implications of Voter Attitudes

Each of these two accounts, as well as my own, generate differing observable predictions that can be compared to help adjudicate between them. The main determinant of vote choice, voters' response to increases in information about how incumbents performed, and their views on incumbents, challengers and the idea of re-election itself, all vary across these different approaches. Comparing these outcomes thus gives us a way to judge which of the approaches best fits any given case.

As a way to structure the comparison across approaches, Tables 2.1 and 2.2 summarize these predictions, with the first focusing on underlying voter attitudes and the second on downstream voter behavior. Stemming directly from the theoretical framework presented in Figure 2.1 at the beginning of this chapter, Table 2.1 addresses the micro-foundations of my theory. The first two columns focus on voters' underlying beliefs about politicians in general—voter disdain for politicians (Column A)—and about re-elected incumbents in particular—the belief that politicians learn in office how to circumvent governmental control (Column B). In my model of an electoral disconnection, and in contrast to the two other approaches, voter disdain for politicians

is high and voters believe incumbents learn how to better engage in shirking and malfeasance in office without getting caught. As a result of these two attitudes, voters also doubt whether good performance in office in a first term will be repeated if the incumbent is re-elected (Column C). This final testable implication comes directly from Figure 2.1, the box immediately preceding the electoral dis-connection.

Table 2.1: Testable Implications Related to Voter Attitudes

	Disdain for politicians	On-the-job learning helps incumbents evade oversight	Good performance will be repeated if re-elected
	A	B	C
Standard account 1: Low access to performance information	No prediction	No	Yes
Standard account 2: Identity-based voting	No prediction	No prediction	Yes
Electoral dis-connection	Yes	Yes	No

Neither of the other two accounts would have a clear prediction for voter disdain for politicians (Column A), as both high and low disdain could be consistent with the approaches. Neither of these models offer a theoretical reason why voters' views on politicians as a whole should impact their voting behavior. Even with

high disdain, voters may not worry about re-electing incumbents, provided strong institutions of oversight, political parties or ethnic ties could serve to rein in their behavior in a subsequent term.

The models have differing predictions for the two other voter attitudes included in Table 2.1. In the information constraint model, voters are assumed to want to reward incumbents who perform well. A desire to reward, however, is inconsistent with a belief that incumbents learn malfeasance on the job and become worse performers overtime, thus voters should not hold this view of incumbents (Column B). Again because the approach assumes voters want to reward good performers but they lack the information to do so, the model would predict that, conditional on knowing incumbents performed well, voters would not question that good first-term performance would be repeated (Column C).

The identity-based model would have no prediction about whether voters believe that incumbents learn how to better engage in misconduct while in office (Column B). It is possible voters may suspect this type of on-the-job learning occurs, but their prioritization of the identity of the candidate makes it so these attitudes do not translate into an electoral dis-connection. In addition, the identity-voting model would expect voters to believe that good incumbent performance in a first term would be repeated in a subsequent term (Column C). Voters are assumed to support their co-partisan or co-ethnic precisely because they believe them to be more likely to perform in line with their desires than candidates who do not share their identity, either in terms of the values with which they implement public policy or the particularistic benefits they will receive. Furthermore, the approach offers no reason for why voters should be skeptical that the performance they value will be repeated.

2.4.3 Testable Implications of Voter Behavior

The discussion thus far has focused on the micro-foundations of the theory, especially those voter beliefs, depicted in Figure 2.1, that are central to my main argument. I turn now to the question of voting behavior. Table 2.2 outlines the predictions of each of the three approaches for a range of voter behaviors in re-elections.

I first consider what each account would predict to be the most important determinant of vote choice in re-elections (Column D). Because the information account assumes voters want to sanction but constraints on information make it impossible to do so, the implicit assumption is that incumbent performance is the most important determinant of vote choice. Armed with accurate performance information, voters would shift their vote for or against the incumbent based on that information, and at the expense of other electoral considerations. In identity-based voting, whatever aspect of identity was most relevant to voters would be the most important determinant of vote choice, whether that be partisanship or ethnicity. In my model, the most important determinant of vote choice would be incumbency status, though not incumbent performance per se, with voters tending to prefer challengers over any incumbent, good or bad performers alike. Because of the strength of voters' negative views on incumbency and re-election, incumbency status should override other candidate traits in determining vote choice.

Table 2.2: Testable Implications of Voter Behavior in Re-Elections

	Most important determinant of vote choice	Response to increased performance information	Incumbency Advantage or Disadvantage	Support for outsider challengers	Support option of re-election	Direct impact of strong oversight on vote choice
	D	E	F	G	H	I
Standard account 1: Low access to performance information	Incumbent performance	Voters reward/punish accordingly	Incumbency Advantage or Neither	No prediction	Yes	None
Standard account 2: Identity-based voting	Non-performance-based traits (i.e. Party affiliation/ethnicity)	Reward/punish conditional on incumbent party/ethnicity	Neither (Prefer co-partisans/co-ethnics regardless of incumbency)	Prefer party insiders over outsiders	Yes	None
Electoral dis-connection	Incumbency status (challengers preferred)	None: Prefer challengers even over incumbents who perform well	Incumbency Disadvantage	Prefer outsider challengers	No	Voters more willing to support incumbents

The next testable implication concerns how voters would respond to increased access to information about incumbent performance (Column E). Precisely because the first approach views constraints to information as the main inhibitor of voter sanctioning, the model would predict that incumbents would be rewarded or punished in accordance with the new information. Identity-based voting would predict that rewarding or punishing would depend on the strength of identity as a voting input and the congruence between performance and the identity of the incumbent. Using the example of partisan loyalty, positive performance information would lead to greater voter support to the extent that the incumbent who performed well was a co-partisan, but may be unlikely to impact voter behavior if the incumbent who performed well was from an opposing party. In contrast to these two approaches, my model would predict that performance information would have no impact on the likelihood of choosing the incumbent over the challenger. Due to questioning whether good performance would be repeated and the belief that poor behavior in office increases over time, voters would prefer challengers over both good and bad performers alike. This would also suggest that increased access to performance information would have no effect on final voting decisions.

The three approaches also have different expectations with regard to whether incumbents enjoy an incumbency advantage due to holding office (Column F). The incumbency advantage refers to an increase in the incumbent's prospects of being elected after serving in office compared to challengers, due to benefits specific to office-holding rather than traits of the incumbent herself. For example, being the incumbent may bring financial advantages for campaigning, such as being better able to fundraise or even using state resources for campaign costs. Incumbents also may have informational advantages such as benefiting from free advertising merely by communicating about their activities in office, securing elite endorsement or gaining

preferential access to media (Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder Jr 2006; Boas and Hidalgo 2011). In turn, these advantages may scare-off the kinds of higher quality candidates that face higher opportunity costs of entering the race (Butler 2009; Cox and Katz 1996; Levitt and Wolfram 1997). Enjoying an incumbency advantage, however, means both being able to marshal all of these potential advantages, as well as staving off any disadvantages to office-holding related to voters' negative views on incumbents.

In the first standard account, where information constraints hinder electoral accountability, having either an incumbency advantage or neither an advantage nor disadvantage is possible. If the main driver of voting behavior is information about incumbent performance, then there may be an incumbency advantage due to incumbents using their office to increase voters' information about themselves relative to that of challengers. If, however, incumbents are unable to capitalize on their informational advantage, then we would expect to see neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. Indeed, an incumbency disadvantage would be unlikely, as voters would have no reason to systematically disdain incumbents, particularly given it is assumed that they would be willing to reward them if only they had good information. Since voters care about performance, and if incumbents on average perform poorly, then having accurate information about incumbents' tendency to perform poorly may generate what appears to be an incumbency disadvantage, but may simply reflect voters' tendency to vote out most incumbents because of their performance.

Where voters place a greater weight on aspects of identity like partisanship and ethnicity, it would be hard for incumbents to develop a systematic advantage or disadvantage, since the vote choice would be more closely aligned with the identity of the candidate, incumbents and challengers alike, and not with whether the incumbent could make use of the benefits of office. More broadly, voters' response to incumbency

would be outweighed by their preference for candidates who shared their partisan or ethnic identity, yielding neither an incumbency advantage nor disadvantage on average.

In contrast, my account of an electoral dis-connection would predict an incumbency *dis*-advantage. Voters' systematic preference for challengers over incumbents, particularly due to their belief that performance worsens across terms, would create an electoral handicap that would be due to holding office, rather than to individual performance or other character traits of the incumbent herself.

Next, I consider how the predictions for voter support of outsider versus insider challengers vary across the three approaches (Column G). By political insider, I mean a candidate with a history of holding either elected or appointed office or strong engagement with a political party. The first standard account would have no predictions for insider versus outsider challengers, as the model focuses exclusively on incumbent performance information, and therefore offers little theorizing that could apply to the question of how voters distinguish between different types of challengers.

The identity-based voting account would predict support for insider challengers. Party insider challengers would be preferred to party outsiders to the extent that partisanship is the most important determinant of vote choice. If parties had a strong ethnic identity and ethnicity were an important determinant of vote choice, then again insider challengers would be preferred to outsiders.

In contrast to these two accounts, with an electoral dis-connection, voters would be expected to prefer outsider challengers. Voters' views on learning on the job generates a suspicion of experience in office. This not only translates into a worry about re-electing incumbents, but also gives voters a reason to prefer, all else equal, outsider challengers with no government experience, as insider challengers have already had a chance to learn on the job.

Both standard accounts would predict that voters support incumbents having the legal option to run for re-election (Column H). If information is the constraint on electoral accountability, then voters are ultimately interested in rewarding and punishing incumbents. They would therefore not want to preclude incumbents from being able to run for a subsequent term, but rather, would favor re-election to take advantage of the accountability-related and other benefits it offers. In identity-based voting, voters would want to make sure their co-partisan or co-ethnic incumbents have the chance to run again, even if it means tolerating the chance that the opposing incumbent can also run. Thus voters should on the whole support the legal option of re-election. In contrast, my model would predict support for banning re-election. Voter disdain for incumbents and the desire to eliminate the possibility of them winning a second term would ultimately translate into wanting to prevent them from having the right to run in the first place.

Finally, the strength of oversight institutions should have no direct impact on vote choice (Column I) in either of the two standard accounts. Of course, oversight institutions could have an indirect impact in the sense of improving or worsening performance, which may then influence voter decision-making. But neither of the accounts offer a theoretical reason for why voters would be swayed directly by the strength of oversight institutions themselves.

In contrast, in my model, strong oversight institutions would increase voters' willingness to support the incumbent. The corollary of weak oversight creating an electoral dis-connection is that if voters begin to perceive oversight as strong, it could re-establish the electoral connection. The intuition is in line with the Cleary and Stokes argument (2006) that the key to a healthy democracy is not trusting individual politicians, but rather skepticism of politicians combined with trust in accountability institutions to keep those politicians in line. If voters trust that the system of oversight

is effective enough to rein in second-term incumbents, then it no longer matters that they, as all politicians, are only self-interested, or have learned how to better evade detection in trying to shirk or engage in corruption. Stronger oversight reduces the likelihood incumbents will act on either of those impulses, making voters more willing to re-elect.

2.5 Conclusion

That an electoral connection between voters and politicians exists is often assumed rather than empirically tested. Research examining how electoral accountability may fail has focused on the ways that voters may not use performance information as an input when they consider whether to re-elect, either because they lack access to or the ability to use that information effectively, or because other candidate traits, like party or ethnicity, outweigh performance. But each of these accounts is predicated on an assumption that voters are willing to consider re-electing the incumbent and would use performance information if they could; in other words, they assume central tenets of the electoral connection hold.

I argue that there are certain contexts—weak party systems with ineffective horizontal accountability—in which that assumption is unfounded. This chapter laid out in detail my theoretical argument for why. When parties are frail, weak accountability institutions and the poor performance they tend to foster generate voter disdain for politicians, particularly causing voters to doubt candidates’ intrinsic motivation for holding office. Then, weak horizontal accountability means that as politicians learn on the job in their first term about how to circumvent systems of governmental oversight, there is little risk of sanctions if they act on their new knowledge. Voters, cognizant of this dynamic, come to believe re-elected incumbents will

face less constraints on their behavior in office in their second-term relative to both their first term and to that of newly elected challengers. Voters thus begin to doubt both the internal motivation of politicians in general and the external constraint faced by incumbents in particular, leading to a skepticism about incumbent performance in a subsequent term if re-elected.

This doubt about how re-elected incumbents will perform impacts voter behavior by creating a general preference for challengers over incumbents that cannot be overcome by good performance in office. Rather than risk an incumbent running and winning, voters may even come to support eliminating the possibility of re-election in the first place. The result is an electoral dis-connection that makes electoral accountability difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

The observable implications of my theory and two contrasting accounts were also laid out, and will be tested in the chapters to follow, providing strong evidence for each step in the theory presented here. In the next two chapters, I provide the evidence for Peru's electoral dis-connection, before turning to the empirical support for my theoretical explanation for why that connection has broken down.

| Part I: The Electoral Disconnection in Peru

3 | Anti-Incumbent Bias and the Rejection of Re-election

The electoral connection—or the link between voters and politicians that is established through re-election—is conceived as necessary for achieving electoral accountability. Simply having the right to run for re-election, however, is not enough to generate an electoral connection. Politicians have to want to seek re-election, securing it must be a realistic possibility, and voters have to at least consider rewarding strong performing incumbents with a subsequent term. With these conditions met, politicians have the right incentives in place to make good performance in office more likely. For if not, voters can use the tool available to them—their vote choice in a re-election contest—to sanction poor performance.

Most research on voting behavior, however, assumes that these electoral connection conditions largely hold. In part, this may be due to the disproportionate number of studies that focus on contexts in which party systems are strong. Since political parties can play a key role in maintaining the electoral connection, fully understanding the extent to which the electoral connection holds would require studying contexts in which party systems are weak. As I demonstrate through the case of Peru, a setting of weak party institutionalization, the electoral connection may become vulnerable to breakdown if horizontal accountability systems are not sufficiently strong to act as substitutes to parties to keep the electoral connection intact.

Part I of this manuscript presents the evidence for the breakdown in the electoral connection in Peru. In this chapter, I focus on voter bias against incumbents and against the institution of re-election as a whole. The following chapter shows how even good performance is not sufficient to help incumbents overcome their electoral disadvantage to get re-elected. Overall, the two chapters of Part I paint a picture of how a breakdown in the electoral connection can look when parties are weak, before turning to Part II, which presents the evidence in support of my theoretical argument for how that breakdown occurred.

In this chapter, I first show that despite being legally able to seek re-election,¹ incumbents have very low rates of running for and winning a subsequent term. Drawing on electoral returns data from three mayoral elections (2006, 2010 and 2014), I demonstrate that the rate at which Peruvian mayors seek and win re-election is much lower on average than many other comparable countries. I then show that these low rates of winning are driven by a systematic bias against incumbents. In most other settings, studies suggest that incumbents enjoy what is termed an incumbency advantage, in which the fact of holding office, and the many electoral benefits that it provides, gives incumbents a leg up over challengers, all else equal. However, following the incumbency advantage literature, I use a regression discontinuity design (RDD) and find that incumbency actually *dis*-advantages candidates relative to challengers. In other words, there is something about office-holding itself that gives incumbents an electoral handicap in their bid for a subsequent term. Finally, using public opinion polling and results from my own survey, I show that there is so much anti-incumbent bias that voters even tend to favor banning the possibility of re-election itself. Rather than letting electoral politics play out and risk an incumbent winning a second term,

¹ This was the case until the 2018 election.

a majority of voters prefer preventing mayors from running for re-election in the first place.

In the previous chapter, I contrasted my theory with two other main approaches for understanding voting behavior in re-elections, to provide support for the distinction between the electoral dis-connection that can occur in certain settings and voting behavior as predicted by other theoretical frameworks. Table 2.2 in that chapter outlined the testable implications related to voting behavior of these two alternative accounts as well as my own. This chapter tests two of those implications. As the discussion in Chapter 2 suggested, neither of the two standard accounts would predict, as we see in the Peruvian case, an incumbency disadvantage (Column F of Table 2.2). Nor would either of the models predict voter support for banning the legal possibility of re-election (Column H of Table 2.2).

I contrast these approaches not to suggest that the case of Peru is an outlier. The voting behavior described in this chapter is in fact completely consistent with the theoretical framework I outlined, and parallels some initial empirical evidence from other similar countries, which is explored further in the concluding chapter. Instead, I contrast these approaches to make the case that existing theoretical explanations for voting behavior in re-elections are insufficient for understanding the empirical evidence from the Peruvian case. Indeed, these models are unable to explain the voter behavior—low rates of running for and winning re-election, incumbency disadvantage, and voter preference for banning re-election overall—that are the focus of this chapter.

3.1 Low Rates of Mayoral Re-election

One of the central premises of the electoral connection and the incentives it provides is that incumbents must perceive that they have a realistic probability of

being re-elected if they run (Mayhew 1974). While it would be counter-productive from an incentivizing good performance standpoint for incumbents to be guaranteed to win, if they see their chances of winning re-election as too low, they may also be less motivated to perform well (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999). In this way, an assessment of mayoral re-election rates gives us a first measure of the extent to which the electoral connection may hold.

In this section and the one that follows, I draw on the data on local elections, described in Chapter 1, from Peru's National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* - JNE).² The first election held after the post-Fujimori democratization process was in 2002, meaning that the 2006 election is the first one in which incumbents can run for re-election. I include that election, as well as the two subsequent ones, held in 2010 and 2014 respectively. As with all of the study, I exclude the district municipalities that are also capitals of provinces, because the same mayor is responsible for both the municipal and provincial levels, making the lines of accountability blurred. I also exclude the 12 districts that were created between 2002 and 2014 because those districts did not participate in all four elections. This yields a dataset of the 1635 districts in existence at the time of the 2002 election.

I first use the data to study rates of mayoral re-election in the three local races included in the study (2006, 2010 and 2014). Comparing mayoral re-elections across Latin American countries shows how Peru has much lower re-election rates than its peers. In the three Chilean local elections held in 1996, 2000 and 2004, 65% of the incumbents who ran were successful in their re-election bid (Bunker and Navia 2012). Similarly, in Brazil, incumbent re-election rates across the 2000 and 2004 elections

² Though the raw data is publicly available (<https://infogob.jne.gob.pe/BaseDatos>), I thank José Luis Incio for providing his cleaned dataset of all mayors who ran for and won re-election for the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections.

were about 59% (Ferraz and Finan 2008). In Mexico, rates are slightly lower, as incumbent parties win a little less than 50% of the time (Marshall 2019).³ However in Peru, incumbent re-election rates were much lower, approaching half the rates of Chile and Brazil, at 35.2%, 33.4% and 29.8% in 2006, 2010 and 2014 respectively. The rates also seem to be declining over time.

An interesting Peruvian anomaly provides additional evidence for the breakdown of the electoral connection. If every incumbent who runs ultimately loses, this likely signals to future mayors that they will also always lose, making the result theoretically the same as in cases where re-election is banned. Yet this is exactly what we see in a subset of Peruvian municipalities.

In only about a quarter of Peru's districts—410 out of 1635—did mayors run for re-election every year across the three election years included in the study. These are the districts that most closely fit Mayhew's conception of incumbents always striving for re-election. However, in 136 of those districts, or about 8% of all districts nationwide, the incumbent never won a single contest across the three elections. Admittedly, it could be the case that incumbents have always lost because their performance was poor. However, this is a less compelling explanation for why three different incumbents ran and lost in three consecutive elections.

Just as there are districts where incumbents always lose, there are also districts where incumbents never run. If the percentage of incumbents who seek re-election reaches zero, then it is the same in practice as re-election being legally prohibited. Yet in 129 districts, again about 8% of all districts, mayors chose not to run for re-election in a single election across the three election years. Together, these 265

³ Individual incumbents were prevented by law from immediate re-election, at least until a recent reform, however scholars of Mexico argued that since the party system is so strong, electoral accountability still worked because voters reward or punish the party of the incumbent in the next election.

never-run or always-lose districts represent about 16% of all districts nationwide.

On the whole, the percent of incumbents that choose to run in Peru is lower than in other countries. In Brazil, about 70% of eligible mayors ran for re-election (Ferraz and Finan 2008). In Chile, the average rate of mayoral incumbents who sought re-election in the local elections held in 1996, 2000 and 2004 was 85% (Bunker and Navia 2012). In Peru, the rate is lower, at an average of 60.89% across 2006, 2010 and 2014. As with the rates of incumbent success, the percentage of incumbents who run for re-election is slightly declining across time, from 63.4% in 2006 to 59.8% in 2010 and 59.7% in 2014. Though not the focus of this project, it is not surprising that incumbents are less and less likely to seek re-election. As mayors begin to recognize that their chances of winning are low, many more may decide not to bother running in the first place.

3.2 The Mayoral Incumbency Disadvantage

We have strong evidence, then, that the likelihood of winning a re-election bid in Peru is low, and seems to be getting even lower. However, it could be that incumbents are, on average, poor performers, which accounts for voters' tendency towards not re-electing them. If this were so, then low rates of re-election would still be consistent with an electoral connection, and would even suggest that electoral accountability were working well. On the other hand, low rates of re-election may signal a systematic bias against incumbents, which could pose a threat to electoral accountability to the extent that incumbent vote share in re-election becomes divorced from incumbent performance in office. Bias against incumbents outside of their performance is problematic because, in order for electoral accountability to incentivize behavior, challengers have to be viable (Ferejohn 1999) but they cannot be

guaranteed to win (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999).

This section offers a methodology and set of results that disentangles these two possible accounts for the low rates of mayoral re-election presented in the previous section. The findings support the second explanation, that of a systematic voter bias. Results from a regression discontinuity design using electoral returns data from three different elections show the presence of an incumbency disadvantage, suggesting that the low likelihood of winning a subsequent term stems from bias against incumbents, thereby reflecting an electoral dis-connection that poses a threat to electoral accountability.

A long literature, originating largely in the American politics tradition, has documented the existence of an incumbency advantage, or a systematic increase in the incumbent's chance of winning a subsequent election compared to challengers due simply to being the incumbent.⁴ A number of explanations have been put forth to account for why incumbents benefit electorally from running as the incumbent. Incumbents may receive higher amounts of campaign donations than challengers, so that a "financial incumbency advantage" during office yields an electoral one during re-election (Fourinaies and Hall 2014). Incumbents also have informational advantages that help in campaigning, given their greater name recognition and the possibility of cultivating favor through constituency service (King 1991). They may even use their position as elected officials to get preferential access to local media (Boas and Hidalgo 2011). Elite cues, such as newspaper endorsements which tend to disproportionately favor incumbents (Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder Jr 2006), may also drive incumbents' improved electoral outcomes. They can use their office staff to publicize their

⁴ Most of that literature focuses on the legislative incumbency advantage. Some of the explanations, such as the benefits of seniority within Congress (Ansolabehere and Snyder Jr 2002; Butler 2009), are not relevant to executive functions and so are not discussed here.

activities in office, or even engage in campaigning as election day approaches. These financial, logistical and informational advantages can then have the indirect effect of scaring-off challengers, particularly the kinds of higher quality challengers that face greater opportunity costs to running and losing (Butler 2009; Cox and Katz 1996; Levitt and Wolfram 1997). Together, these benefits of office give incumbents a leg up at the ballot box that comes simply from holding office, not from any personal traits or abilities.

Though the vast majority of incumbency advantage research has focused on democracies in Europe and North America, there are reasons to believe that incumbents in developing country contexts might also enjoy an electoral advantage from holding office. In low information environments, the incumbents' informational advantage may become relatively more important. Personalistic voting patterns might also be particularly advantageous for incumbents who could use the resources of office to curry favor with constituents. Weak institutions and high levels of corruption should make it even easier for incumbents to use public budgets to fund campaign costs.

And yet, following an emerging literature from other developing countries (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik 2017; Uppal 2009), in Peru we find an incumbency *dis*-advantage. It is not just that Peruvian mayors are unable to marshal the benefits of office, thereby enjoying no benefit relative to challengers. Instead, as this section explains, office-holding actually *harms* their future electoral success.

3.2.1 Methodology and Results

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 vote share is problematic because whatever drove their win in the first place would influence their likelihood of winning in the future. In other words, candidates who win (meaning the incumbents in the next election) are likely different from candidates who lost in ways that would impact their likelihood of winning again: they are better candidates, connect better with voters, have more loyal supporters, are more successful fundraisers, and so on. Incumbents may thus be more likely to win in the next election not because they are incumbents per se, but because of these underlying traits.

To get around this problem, I compare the electoral success in the current election of incumbents who barely won the previous election with the challengers they barely beat. The intuition is that the closer the previous election is, the more the outcome resembles a coin toss: a few extra votes here or there and a different candidate would have won. In contrast, the larger the vote share differential, the more systematic is voters' preference for the winning candidate, and thus the larger the difference in candidate qualities between winners and losers. We can therefore think of close elections as those in which the assignment of candidates to the treatment—being the incumbent—is as-if random. In the language of the regression discontinuity design, assuming the win in the previous election is as-if random allows for causal identification of the effect of incumbency on electoral success in the next election.

I use the data described earlier from Peru's National Elections Board.⁵ Again, 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

⁵ See Aragón and Pique (2019) for additional effects of incumbency using the same data and an RDD design.

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). As I discuss in more detail below, if a candidate does not run in the following election (incumbents and challengers alike), she is still included in the dataset, but is coded as having won 0 votes.

Following Calonico et al. (2017), I estimate the ideal bandwidth—or difference in vote share margin between winners and losers—for this dataset to be 9.7 percentage points. I then run the RDD analysis on a smaller dataset that includes only those candidates who won or lost within this vote share margin in the previous election. This yields 8948 observations, each of which is a candidate-election year (3369 candidates for the 2006 election outcomes, 2907 candidates for 2010 and 2643 for 2014). The dataset includes 25.70% of all candidates, and draws from 65% of the races across the three election years. Because so many candidates run and there is no run-off, in some cases, more than one candidate came within the vote share margin of winning, so the final dataset includes 3131 incumbents and 5788 challengers who they barely beat.

Using the RDD methodology on this dataset of bare-winners and bare-losers, 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 3.1 visually depicts the results. The x-axis plots the vote share margin in the previous election, and the y-axis plots the likelihood of winning the current election. Incumbents, those to the right of zero in vote share margin in the previous election, have a lower probability of winning than the challengers they originally barely beat.

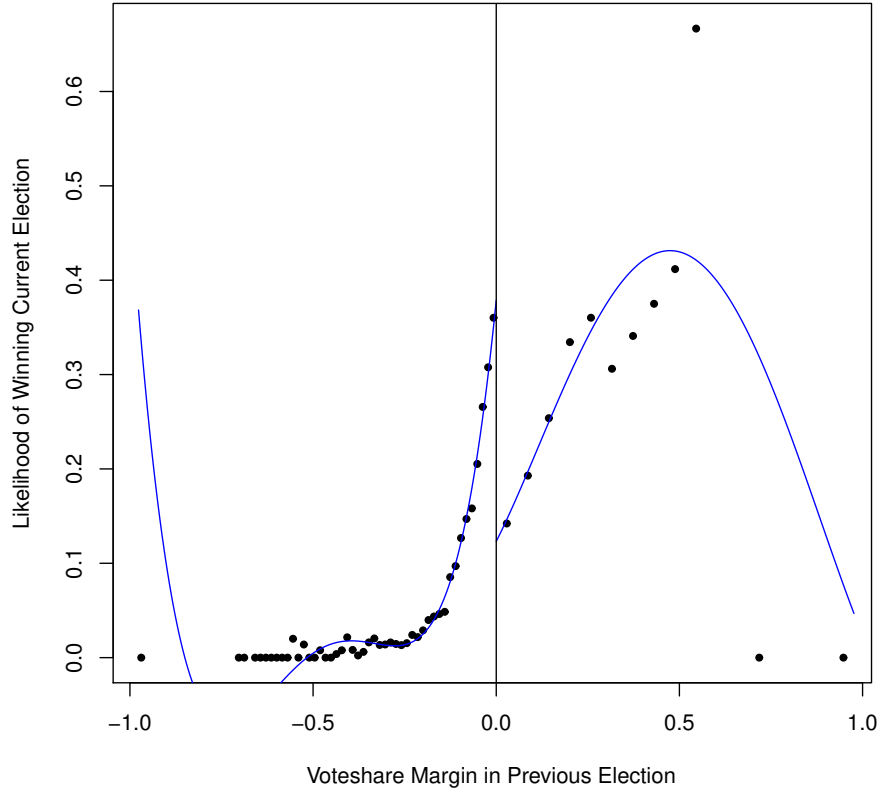


Figure 3.1: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006-2014

3.2.2 Validity of the Findings

Additional figures in Appendix A show the results of a series of standard robustness checks, all of which provide additional support for the existence of an incumbency disadvantage. First, Appendix Figure A.1 plots the estimated incumbency disadvantage for a series of bandwidths, showing that the negative and significant effect is robust to bandwidth choice. In other words, even if you choose elections within

a narrower or wider margin, the results still hold. Second, Appendix Section A.1 describes an alternative estimation using randomization inference following Cattaneo, Frandsen, and Titiunik (2015), in which the same results hold.

In addition, the validity of the RDD as a methodology depends on the threshold dividing treatment and control groups being as-if random. This would be violated if, for example, candidates could control their final vote share in order to be close to the threshold. In the case of RDDs applied to elections, this is theoretically implausible, as no candidate would prefer barely-winning over winning by a large margin. Still, we can test for this possibility directly by assessing if there is sorting of observations right around the discontinuity, meaning if there are disproportionately more observations right above or below the cut-point than overall. Appendix Figure A.2 plots results of a McCrary (2008) density test confirming no manipulation in the running variable, vote share margin, around the cutpoint (p-value 0.96).

Next, 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. Although the estimated effect is highest in 2014 (-0.344), suggesting there has been an increase in the incumbency disadvantage over time, the effect is still large and significant in 2006 and 2010 (-0.142 and -.241 respectively).

Finally, recent critiques of the RDD methodology (Eggers 2017; De Magalhães 2015; De Magalhães and Hirvonen 2019) highlight how differential selection into running between incumbents and challengers may bias results. If incumbents are simply less likely to run, and thus they lose by default of not running, then a detected incumbency bias may merely reflect incumbents' decision not to run, rather than voter preferences. I first test for differential re-running by conducting an RDD

with the decision to run as the outcome variable, rather than the standard outcome of whether the candidate won. As Appendix Figure A.7 shows, candidates who barely won (incumbents) are in fact less likely to run in the subsequent election than candidates who barely lost (challengers). Given that the effect increases over time,⁶ 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 3.1. 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 3.1 is not merely a product of voters choosing challengers because the incumbent is not on the ballot.

Furthermore, Figure 3.1 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. In reality, if the incumbents would have run, most if not all would have won some votes, and some may have even won the election, hence the estimate representing a lower bound. In contrast, the analysis conditional on run-

⁶ 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.

ning, which is the analysis shown in Appendix Figure A.6, is an upper bound because the incumbents who do not run are removed from the dataset and, assuming these are the incumbents most likely to lose, including them would lower the estimate. The “true” estimate, though impossible to recover, is the one in which all candidates who barely win or lose decide 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.

3.3 Rejection of the Premise of Re-election

As we saw, the likelihood that an incumbent mayor wins re-election in Peru is low, and is declining overtime. In fact, there seems to be something about holding office that is systematically lowering incumbents’ likelihood of winning re-election, resulting in a significant incumbency disadvantage. I turn now to another important example of Peru’s electoral dis-connection. Despite the fact that incumbents’ likelihood of winning re-election is low, the majority of Peruvian voters actually prefer to reduce the probability of winning to zero. Evidence from public opinion polling as well as my own survey suggest that rather than merely waiting for a poorly performing incumbent to be voted out of office, thus preserving the option of re-electing good performers, the majority of Peruvians prefer to preempt the possibility of running outright.

In December 2018, a national referendum was put to the vote which included the question of whether members of Congress should have the right to run for a subsequent term. The results, in which 85.81% of Peruvian voters opted to ban Congressional re-election, provide a real-world test of voters’ professed political preferences. However, since Congress has been one of the most disparaged institutions in

Peru for some time, it might be possible that the high support for the ban was about Congress and not about re-election per se. But evidence suggests Peruvians feel just as strongly about prohibiting re-election when it comes to their local mayors.

In March 2015, Peru's Congress passed a ban on immediate re-election for the leaders of regions, provinces and municipalities. Prior to the law, there was no limit on re-election, with mayors being able to be re-elected indefinitely. The ban that passed mandated that, beginning in the local election to be held in 2018, mayors had to sit out one term before being allowed to run again.

Public opinion polling from the time the ban was passed suggests members of Congress were implementing the population's underlying preferences by pushing the law forward. In October 2014, almost 6 months before the ban passed, polling data showed that only 19% of respondents were in favor of unlimited re-election for mayors, as the law allowed at the time. In contrast, 56% favored either limiting immediate re-election, as in the final text of the ban, or prohibiting it outright.⁷ A few months earlier, in June 2014, a poll suggested that when it came to regional presidents, 72% favored outlawing their re-election.⁸

Once the ban passed, voters continued to support it. In April 2015, one month after it was enacted, national-level polling suggested 67% of Peruvians agreed with the law.⁹ Follow-up polls in the years afterward, asking specifically about support

⁷ The question asked: What is your opinion about the re-election of mayors? Note that a separate question asked about re-election of regional presidents. In Spanish: *¿Qué opina usted con relación a la reelección de alcaldes?* Five answer options are reported: Re-election without restriction; Immediate re-election but only one time; No immediate re-election, but re-election after sitting out one term; No re-election; No answer. *IPSOS Opinion Data*, 20 October 2014.

⁸ The poll did not ask about mayoral re-election. *IPSOS Opinion Data*, 16 June 2014.

⁹ The question asked: Do you agree or disagree with the law that prohibits the re-election of regional presidents, provincial mayors and district mayors? In Spanish: *¿Está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con la ley que impide la reelección de presidentes regionales, alcaldes provinciales y alcaldes distritales?* Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, April 2015.

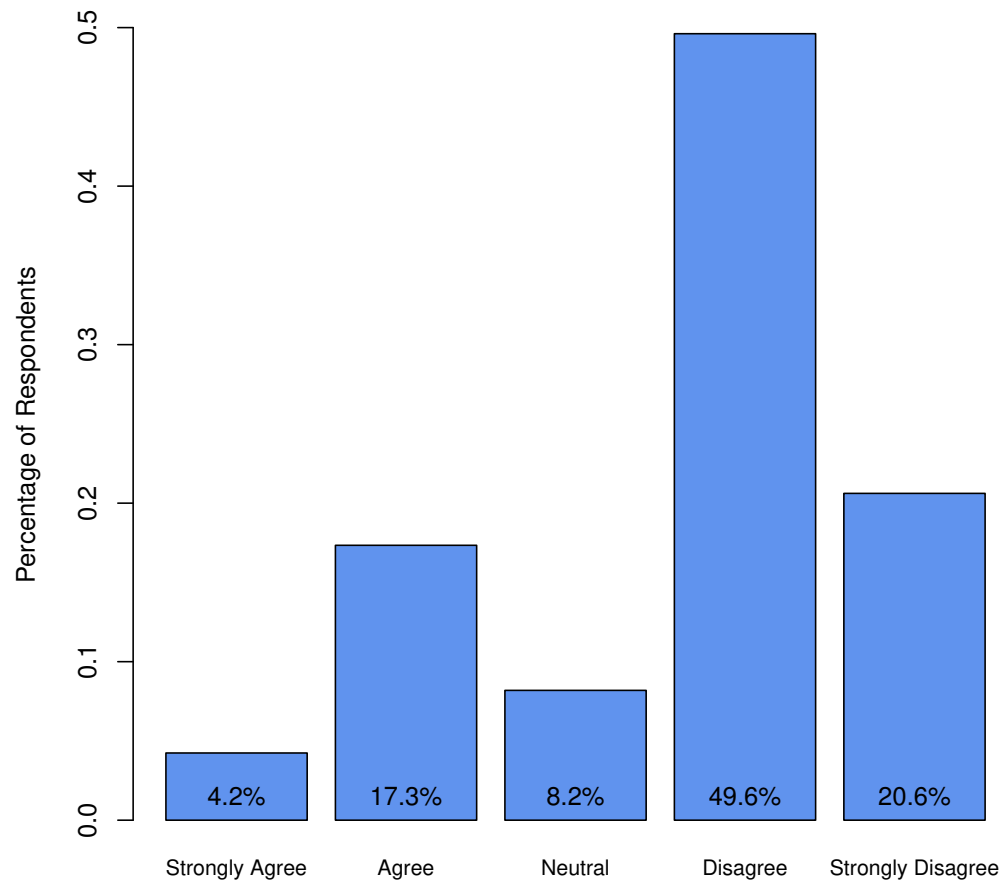
for mayoral re-election, showed these attitudes persisted. In both 2016 and 2017, 66% of respondents continued to disagree with mayors having the right to run for re-election.¹⁰ This support existed despite the fact that by then there was debate within Congress to overturn the law and allow mayors once again to have the right to run for re-election (Neyra Zegarra 2018).

The qualitative interviews I conducted in municipalities in three regions of Peru also suggested that respondents were broadly in favor of barring mayors from seeking a subsequent term in office. I then used the original survey to test whether this rejection of re-election existed within the population more widely, as the polling data cited above would suggest. Respondents were asked if they agreed with mayors being able to run for re-election.¹¹ Closely paralleling public opinion polling at the national level, the vast majority of respondents reported being opposed to mayoral re-election, as 70.23% responded ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Figure 3.2 shows the full distribution of responses.

It might be the case, however, that the strong preference for eliminating the legal option of re-election is concentrated among only a certain subset of the population, in which case it would not suggest a generalized support for the ban across most voters. To gauge whether this is the case, I study variation in support for re-election across respondents. The results suggest that in fact the rejection of

¹⁰ In 2016, the question asked: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to permit the re-election of provincial and district municipal mayors for one additional period? In Spanish: *¿Está Ud. de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con la propuesta que permitiría la reelección de los alcaldes provinciales y distritales hasta por un periodo adicional?* In 2017, the question asked: Would you agree or disagree with a law that allowed current mayors to run for immediate re-election? In Spanish: *¿Estaría Ud. de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con una ley que permita que los actuales alcaldes puedan postular para la reelección inmediata en sus cargos?* Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, November 2016, and June 2017.

¹¹ The question read: “To what extent do you agree with mayors being able to run for re-election to have more than one term in office?” Answer options were: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. In Spanish: *>Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo con que los alcaldes puedan postular a la re-elección para tener más de un periodo de gobierno?*



Results from original survey of 1061 respondents. 'No response' and 'Don't Know' responses removed (.5% and 1.7% of the sample respectively).

Figure 3.2: Do You Agree With Mayors Being Able to Run for Re-election?

re-election is largely uniform across the population of the survey.

Using regression analysis, I test for whether the respondents' background characteristics predict their support for re-election.¹² I run the analysis for the five socioeconomic questions included in the survey (gender, age, income, education and indigenous first language), as well as for the four municipal types related to incumbent re-election rates.¹³ Table 3.1 shows the full results. The variables that are statistically significant are those in which support for banning re-election is concentrated in that sub-set of the survey population.

The results show that gender, income and indigenous first language are not statistically correlated with support for re-election. In other words, support for re-election did not vary across women and men, across income categories, or between indigenous and non-indigenous respondents. Higher age and higher education levels are both statistically correlated with support for banning re-election, with older respondents and those with greater education both being more likely to support the ban.

Support for barring re-election did not vary across the municipal types, except for in the case of the 'always lose' municipalities, where the incumbents always run but never win re-election.¹⁴ Respondents in these municipalities were more likely to support mayors having the right to seek re-election. This might suggest that, since their mayors never win re-election anyway, respondents from these districts are less worried about the possibility of incumbents securing a subsequent term in office, so

¹² I ran a simple OLS model where the outcome is the response to the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with mayoral re-election?'. The responses run from '1' for 'strongly agree' to '5' for 'strongly disagree'.

¹³ These are the characteristics registered in the Pre-Analysis Plan.

¹⁴ As compared to the base category, which is the municipalities that fall somewhere between the two extremes of electoral accountability, meaning not the 'never run' or 'always lose' districts, but also not having recent re-election of the incumbent.

Table 3.1: Predictors of Support for the Legal Option of Mayoral Re-election

	<i>DV: Support for Banning Re-election</i>
Gender (female)	−0.035 (0.078)
Age	0.013*** (0.003)
Education	0.064*** (0.017)
Income	0.002 (0.077)
Indigenous First Language	−0.030 (0.092)
Municipal Type: ‘Always Lose’	−0.218* (0.112)
Municipal Type: ‘Never Run’	−0.051 (0.118)
‘Municipal Type: Re-elected 2014’	−0.0002 (0.224)
Constant	2.923*** (0.157)
Observations	996

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Data comes from an original survey fielded among 1061 respondents. The dependent variable is the response to the question “To what extent do you agree with mayors being able to run for re-election to have more than one term in office?” Answer options were: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. ‘Strongly Agree’ is coded as 1 whereas ‘Strongly Disagree’ is coded as 5. Positive coefficients are therefore associated with more support for banning re-election, while negative coefficients correspond to support for allowing it. District-level clustered standard errors reported.

they are more willing to let them make the attempt.

Overall, the findings from this simple regression analysis suggest that while there are some patterns in the data, the drive to ban re-election is largely supported by a wide swath of voters. This generalized preference for banning re-election is thus indicative of the extent to which an electoral dis-connection has taken hold.

3.4 Conclusion

Peruvian politics, at least at the local level, seems to reject the logic of an electoral connection. As the evidence presented here showed, the likelihood that incumbent mayors even seek re-election, and if they do, the rate at which they win a subsequent term is quite low compared to other Latin American countries. In contrast to other settings in which incumbents use their time in office to improve their chances in the next election, Peru's incumbents actually face a huge electoral disadvantage relative to challengers. And Peruvian voters are so biased against incumbents that the majority would actually prefer banning re-election outright rather than risking an incumbent winning a subsequent term.

The political behavior I document here differ from what we would expect to see if we follow other accounts of voting in re-elections, where lack of information about incumbent performance skews electoral accountability, or preferences for co-partisans and co-ethnics influence, and often outweigh, the desire to sanction. These patterns of voter behavior thus suggest the need for a new approach to understanding voting in certain contexts.

Not only signaling a different logic of voting behavior, the empirical facts from the Peru case also suggest the presence of a huge constraint on electoral accountability. For even if local politicians are interested in seeking re-election, the fact that they

are unlikely to win even if they try removes a key incentive believed to generate greater political accountability: the reward of a subsequent term in office. All of this might be able to be overcome, that is, electoral accountability might still be possible, if one condition held. Despite incumbents being disadvantaged on average, if voters still distinguished between good and bad performers and rewarded strong performing incumbents at the ballot box, politicians would be incentivized to perform well. However, as the next chapter explores in detail, Peruvians seem to reject both good and bad performers alike.

4 | Voting Them All Out: Punishing High Performing Incumbents

As the last chapter made clear, a set of empirical facts about Peruvians' voting behavior and preferences in local elections suggest the existence of an electoral dis-connection. The likelihood that incumbents win re-election is lower than in many other countries. In contrast to other contexts where research suggests an incumbency advantage, Peruvian incumbents not only seem unable to leverage the benefits of office to fend off challengers, but in fact, office-holding itself seems to be harming their chances of winning re-election. Voters on the whole are skeptical of granting incumbents another term, so much so that the majority favor banning re-election outright, rather than risking an incumbent winning a subsequent term.

And yet, all of this would not necessarily spell doom for the electoral connection, or indeed for electoral accountability overall, if performance mattered. That is, if incumbents who performed well could convince voters to give them another chance in office, despite an overall disdain for the idea of subsequent terms, then re-election would still incentivize good performance. However, in perhaps the strongest evidence yet for an electoral dis-connection, Peruvian voters seem unswayed by incumbents' good performance, such that performing well is insufficient to help incumbents gain an electoral advantage over challengers. In other words, Peruvian voters seem to vote against strong performing incumbents just as frequently as poorly performing ones.

A wealth of evidence, presented in this chapter, makes this case clear. First, a conjoint experiment embedded within an original survey provides a unique and robust way of studying the criteria voters use when they judge candidates in re-elections. I present respondents with pairs of hypothetical incumbents and challengers that vary along many different characteristics, one of which is how the incumbent performed in office. I then ask respondents which candidate they would vote for to be mayor of their municipality. The results suggest that not only do respondents on average prefer challengers, but also that incumbency status is the most important determinant of vote choice, with the preference for challengers overshadowing other candidate characteristics like gender, ethnicity, work experience and community ties. Perhaps most importantly, the findings also suggest that this preference for challengers holds even when respondents are explicitly informed that the incumbent performed well.

Second, I use electoral returns data as an additional test of the role that incumbent performance plays in impacting voters' decisions in re-elections. Returning to the incumbency disadvantage research design discussed in the previous chapter, we saw that incumbents who barely won were much less likely to win in the next election than challengers who barely lost, suggesting that the fact of being the incumbent is harming their electoral prospects. But would this electoral handicap still exist if these barely-won incumbents performed well in office? To test this contention, I slightly modify the research design to assess whether incumbent performance mediates the negative electoral impact of holding office. Results suggest that in fact good performance does *not* improve incumbents' likelihood of success relative to challengers.

Together, evidence from these two different methodologies provides a portrait of Peruvian voters as being so biased against incumbents that that they are unswayed by even good performance. Furthermore, the voting behavior runs counter to what would be predicted by existing models. Returning to the testable implications devel-

oped in Chapter 2, I first consider predictions about the most important determinant of vote choice in re-elections (Column D of Table 2.2). In the first standard approach to voting behavior, lack of access to performance information is understood to be the main inhibitor of electoral accountability. Implicit in this account is the idea that voters *want* to reward or punish incumbents, if only information would make it possible to do so. In this account, then, we would expect incumbent performance to be the most important determinant of how voters allot their vote in a re-election. In identity-based voting, the candidate's identity—partisanship, ethnicity or the like—is the most important determinant of vote choice. Thus neither of these approaches explains the Peruvian case, where what most impacts vote choice is incumbency status, with challengers on average preferred to incumbents overall.

I also consider expectations about how voters would respond to increasing access to performance information (Column E of Table 2.2). If information is the main constraint to electoral accountability, then voters should respond to improved information by rewarding or punishing the incumbent accordingly. Identity-based voting would predict that while performance information may matter, it would be influenced or even outweighed by identity concerns like party or ethnic loyalty. Neither would predict how performance information operates in the Peruvian context, where information about good performance is ineffective in helping incumbents overcome voters' preference for challengers.

As in the preceding chapter, contrasting with these two accounts in this way suggests that the political phenomenon that are the focus of this chapter are in fact indicative of a different logic of voting behavior, one that is more consistent with the theoretical argument I advance in Chapter 2. I now turn to the detailed exploration of that evidence. The chapter begins by describing the methodology of the conjoint survey experiment and explaining why it is particularly well suited to evaluate voters'

preferences between incumbents and challengers. Then I present the results of the experiment, where respondents demonstrate their preference for challengers, even over incumbents that were described as having performed well. The second half of the chapter focuses on a different methodology, drawing on the regression discontinuity design of the previous chapter and using real-world electoral data. I describe the method and the results which, consistent with the conjoint experiment, suggest that even good performance cannot help mayors overcome the incumbency disadvantage.

4.1 Assessing Vote Choice in Mayoral Re-elections

Survey experiments are a relatively recent methodology used by political scientists to assess respondent preferences, attitudes and beliefs, with the experimental component adding more confidence to the validity of the findings as compared to direct questions about those preferences. One common survey experiment methodology is the use of vignettes, in which respondents are presented with a description of a person, for example, a politician, and are then asked about their support for that politician. The researcher randomly varies one characteristic of that politician, such that respondents in the treatment group see the vignette with one value of the characteristic and the control group sees it with the other. Vignettes assessing voter attitudes about corruption and electoral accountability have commonly used this set-up (Botero et al. 2015; Klašnja and Tucker 2013; Vera 2019; Weitz-Shapiro and Winters 2017; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2013, 2016).

A newer methodology, conjoint analysis, allows for varying a number of candidate characteristics at a time.¹ In a candidate choice conjoint experiment, respon-

¹ Carlson (2015) offers one of the first political science applications, particularly that studies how preferences for good performance in office versus other candidate characteristics influence vote choice. Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014) systematized the methodology for political

dents are presented with two different candidates, each of which varies along many different characteristics, and then are asked to choose between them. The intuition is that randomly varying the characteristics, and then studying the rates at which a candidate with those characteristics is chosen, allows the researcher to isolate the impact of each characteristic on vote choice.

One advantage of the conjoint set-up is that it allows for comparing the weight of different candidate traits to each other, rather than vignettes which only test one or two characteristics at a time. This allows me to test not only whether voters use performance information to reward or punish incumbents, but to understand which, if any, other candidate characteristics outweigh incumbent performance. Choosing between two candidates that vary on multiple dimensions also better reflects real-life voting. Importantly, it reduces the risk of social desirability bias, or respondents' modifying their preferences in order to be viewed more favorably by the research team. Since the candidates vary on multiple characteristics, the respondent need not worry that the enumerator will realize they chose a given candidate because of a trait that is viewed negatively. In my set-up, this may be the case, for example, for choosing candidates with a history of poor performance in office or that engage in gift-giving as part of their campaign.

The key goal of the conjoint experiment I implemented is to assess which candidate characteristics matter to Peruvians when they make voting decisions in re-elections, principally in order to assess how the desire to punish or reward incumbents impacts vote choice.² Table 4.2 presents the eight candidate characteristics that

science and made it more accessible to academics.

² See also the Pre-Analysis Plan registered prior to launching the survey: <http://egap.org/registration/2762>.

were tested, and the values each characteristic could take.³ The conjoint analysis questions were placed at the beginning of the survey to avoid priming effects, as later survey questions about incumbency or performance might influence responses if the conjoint came after them. The candidate profiles were randomized at the level of the individual respondent. For each of four question items, two candidate profiles were randomly generated, each of which contained one of the possible values of the eight characteristics. Respondents saw the two candidate profiles side-by-side and were then asked: “Which of the two candidates would you vote for to be mayor of your district?”⁴ The process was repeated four times, meaning the respondent saw four sets of profiles of two randomly-generated candidates, and was asked the same question immediately after viewing each pair of candidates. Appendix Figure B.1 shows how the presentation of the two side-by-side candidate profiles appeared to respondents on the tablet, and Table 4.1 offers an English translation of Appendix Figure B.1.

The main outcome of interest is the respondents’ choice when asked to select between the set of two candidates. The outcome variable corresponding to each candidate is whether the candidate was chosen by the respondent. The final dataset includes 7576 unique candidate profiles.⁵

My main objective in using this methodology is to understand how voters differentially perceive incumbents and challengers. To test whether voters prioritize rewarding or punishing incumbents, I include incumbency status as one of the candi-

³ Appendix Table B.1 presents the Spanish language used in the actual survey for each of the characteristics.

⁴ Full text in English: Now I am going to show you two candidates. Imagine that these two candidates are running for mayor of your district municipality. Which of the two would you vote for to be mayor of your district? Full text in Spanish: *Ahora le voy a mostrar dos candidatos distintos. Imagine que estos dos candidatos postulan a la alcaldía de su municipalidad distrital. ¿Por cuál de los dos votaría usted para que sea alcalde de su distrito?*

⁵ In cases where the respondent answered ‘No response’, the two candidates for that question have been removed from the dataset.

Table 4.1: Conjoint Set-up as it Appeared To Respondents (English Translation)

	Candidate 1 MARIA GONZALES	Candidate 2 JOSE CHAVEZ
Village	She is from your village.	He is from the village that is 2 hours away from yours.
Work	She is the owner of a very successful private company.	He is the owner of a very successful private company.
First Language	Quechua	Spanish
Campaign gift giving	She never gives out gifts at campaign rallies.	He never gives out gifts at campaign rallies.
Family in politics	She is the first person in her family to run for mayor.	His uncle was also mayor.
Candidates	She is one of the other candidates running for mayor.	He is the current mayor running for re-election.
Member of local social and cultural organizations in the district	No	Yes

Note: Table 4.1 offers a depiction, in English, of how the conjoint set-up appeared to respondents on the tablet. It is a direct English translation of the screen-shot tablet example shown in Appendix Figure B.1.

Table 4.2: 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, such as 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, such as roads and irrigation canals.
	Incumbent: good personalistic performance	He/she is the current mayor running for re-election. As mayor, he/she gave financial help to residents when 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 financial help to residents when 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 <i>centro poblado</i> (village)	He/she is from your <i>centro poblado</i> .
	From other <i>centro poblado</i> (village)	He/she is from the <i>centro poblado</i> 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 to speak was Quechua.
	Not indigenous	The first language that he/she learned to speak was Spanish.
Political dynasty	Member of a political dynasty	His/her uncle was also 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 106	He/she never gives out gifts at campaign rallies.
Gender	Male	Male name
	Female	Female name

date characteristics. In each pair of profiles, one candidate is always the incumbent mayor and the other candidate is always a challenger. What varied is information about the incumbent's performance along two different metrics: implementing public works projects and providing individual financial assistance to municipal residents. The incumbent mayor could therefore take on one of five performance-related conditions: no performance information; good or bad performance in terms of public works projects; and good or bad performance in terms of offering municipal residents individual financial assistance when the need arose.

I chose these two types of performance because of a wealth of evidence that they are valued by voters, both from other researchers' studies as well as my own. Implementing public works projects will be more familiar to the reader, and is widely considered to be an important domain of local politicians' responsibility. What may be less known is the idea of mayors providing individual financial assistance to residents in cases of one-off economic distress, such as covering unexpected medical costs, funeral arrangements, school fees or needed fixes to residents' homes. The qualitative interviews conducted in three different regions of Peru prior to fielding the survey suggested that this kind of particularistic benefit was common across municipalities. In fact, all municipalities admitted openly that the mayor provided this kind of funding, though it was never made clear what funding line from the central government was used, and in one municipality, staff emphasized the mayor used his own personal resources earned from prior work in the private sector. In some ways paralleling constituency services,⁶ mayors had a range of set-ups in place to manage and comply with requests. In most cases, municipal staff described a somewhat formal process for

⁶ Though constituency services is normally associated with American politics, an emerging literature is examining the phenomenon outside of the United States (e.g. Distelhorst and Hou 2017; Bussell 2019).

accessing the funding that required the individual to come in to the municipality and fill out a form describing their need, that would then be verified by the municipality before receiving funds. In a few cases, the process was more informal: on a certain day of the week, citizens formed a line at the the door of the municipality to plead their case directly with the mayor.

Most electoral accountability research tends to assume a priori knowledge of the type of performance that influences voter decision-making. Instead, I use later survey questions to directly test the assumption that voters value the two performance metrics I employ in the conjoint. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of six different potential mayoral responsibilities.⁷ For financial assistance, 80.3% of respondents described providing this kind of aid as a very important or important responsibility of mayors. For public works projects, a full 95.6% described it as very important or important. In a separate question, respondents were asked to rate their current mayor's performance, then to provide the one aspect of performance that most impacted their assessment, and 62.4% of respondents stated public works projects. Thus if any type of performance information were to impact vote choice, it seems most likely to be these two metrics, which clearly are seen by the population as being an important responsibility of local mayors.

4.1.1 Non-incumbency Candidate Traits

I also tested seven non-incumbency characteristics. Given that my primary interest was incumbency, in a way these other characteristics may be thought of as

⁷ Respondents were shown six possible responsibilities of the mayor and were asked to rank each one as either: very important, important, not important, or not a responsibility. In addition to public works projects and individual financial assistance, the other four responsibilities were: Receive the population in person and listen to their worries and/or complaints; Give a job to residents; Offer or improve health, education or social programs; Support the town's annual holidays or parties (*fiestas comunales o patronales*), such as with food, refreshments or financing.

controls. In addition, because the conjoint methodology allows for estimating the relative impact of each characteristic, the conjoint set-up allows for understanding if incumbency is the most important trait to voters, or how important it ranks compared to the other candidate characteristics tested.

I briefly outline the rationale behind including each of the seven characteristics. Because of the low prevalence of female mayors in Peru, I included candidate gender to test whether female candidates faced a penalty at the ballot box. I was also interested in whether gender mediated respondents' views of incumbents and incumbent performance.

Next, given the extent of ethnic voting in other contexts, and the fact that identity-based voting is one of the main alternate approaches to explaining voting behavior, I wanted to test whether voters prefer candidates who share their ethnicity. Following this approach, loyalty to co-ethnics or co-partisans would be expected to outweigh incumbent performance in the case of re-elections. Evaluating the ways in which respondents prefer candidates who share their ethnicity would thus allow me to evaluate two of the key testable implications of my theory (Columns D and E of Figure 2), as I discuss further in the results section below. In Cusco, the region of Peru where I fielded the survey, the predominant indigenous group are the Quechua people. To operationalize being indigenous, each candidate's first language was presented as being either Quechua or Spanish.

Since partisanship is, along with ethnicity, another key aspect of identity that is assumed to impact voting behavior, it may seem conspicuous that the candidate's political party was not included in the conjoint experiment. However, as has been discussed at length, the weakness of the country's political parties (Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Tanaka 2006; Seawright 2012; Zavaleta 2014) means a candidate's party label is unlikely to be a salient factor in determining vote choice. The survey

results themselves also support this design decision. Respondents were asked if there was a political party that they supported or liked more than the others, and only 15% of respondents answered ‘yes’.⁸

Two characteristics related to community ties were included to assess whether informal linkages with politicians were important to voters, because I hypothesized that these kinds of ties could facilitate political accountability when formal mechanisms fail. The first, whether the candidate is a member of local social organizations, comes directly from Lily Tsai’s work (2007) in which, despite a context of authoritarianism overall, local mayors in China were held accountable by citizens when they shared membership in local kinship organizations.

The second characteristic, whether the candidate is from the respondent’s village (*centro poblado*), emerged from the qualitative interviews, in which much of the locus of political action was reported to occur at the village level. Village-level social organizations were quite important, and respondents often reported favoritism on the part of the mayor towards his or her home village. Municipalities in Peru are sometimes quite large in terms of area, and are always composed of many different smaller villages, in addition to the main town where the municipal seat of government is housed. Cusco’s municipalities, for example, according to the 2007 census, have on average 79 villages, with 50% of all municipalities having between 28 and 105 villages. Villages can be quite small, composed of only a few groups of extended families. Given how large the geographic territory might be, some villagers may have to travel 2-3 hours to reach the municipal government. This geographic structure of

⁸ In Spanish: *¿Hay un partido político, movimiento regional o organización política que usted apoya o que a usted le guste más que los otros?* Answer options: yes; no; don’t know; no response. Respondents who answered ‘yes’ were then asked the follow-up question: How often do you vote for that political party? In Spanish: *¿Con qué frecuencia vota usted por este partido político o organización política?* Answer options: always; almost always; sometimes; only when I like their candidate. Only about half of respondents (53.1%) answered ‘always’ or ‘almost always’.

villages may make identity tied to the village potentially more important than to the municipality as a whole.

Qualitative interviews also illustrated the extent to which candidates offered small gifts, like t-shirts, hats, or bags of rice, during their campaigning. As I describe below, respondents themselves in a later question in the survey described such gift-giving as commonplace. I was interested therefore in testing the extent to which voters were swayed by such gifts and whether this varied across incumbents and challengers. Weakness in the political party system probably makes it impossible to have the kind of ongoing and sustained clientelistic networks seen in contexts like Argentina or Mexico (Muñoz 2019). Still, rather than being part of a *quid pro quo* to secure electoral support, I hypothesized that gift giving would be perceived by voters as indicating the candidate would be willing to continue offering individual assistance once in office.⁹ Similarly, I hypothesized that access to resources, proxied by economic background (and hence the work experience of the candidate), would signal to voters that candidates are able to offer more particularistic benefits once in office.

Finally, though the re-election rate of mayors is low, the qualitative research suggested that candidates and mayors sometimes come from the same groups of families. Though a mayor might not be immediately re-elected, it was not uncommon for a member of the mayor's family to later run for and win an election. Research from Brazil suggests loyalty to political dynasties might even override the impulse to sanction incumbent when voters head to the ballot box (Boas, Hidalgo, and Melo 2019).

⁹ Muñoz (2019) makes a different argument that the gifts serve to increase turnout at rallies, which improves electoral support by making the candidate appear more viable to voters.

4.1.2 Randomization and Validity of the Conjoint Design

Before moving on to the results, I discuss a few final details about the conjoint design. I implemented two constraints to the randomization of the individual candidate characteristics. First, for the incumbency status characteristic, one of the two candidate profiles always had the challenger value, since it would be impossible to have two different incumbents running against each other. Second, two female candidates were never presented within the same pair of profiles. In the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections, only 6-7% of all candidates were women. 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 on the whole 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 both may be native Quechua speakers or they both may 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, as is commonly done with online conjoint experiments in order to ensure that the order of the traits does not influence the results. For example, if respondents tended to pick candidates based only on the first trait they see, rather than reading through all of them, then the results would be biased if every respondent saw the same candidate trait presented first, as it would falsely appear that that candidate trait was the most important. Instead, each respondent was randomly selected to see the candidate characteristics listed in

one of three possible orders.¹⁰ For ease of presentation, a given respondent saw all sets of candidate profiles presented in the same order.

One final concern with the conjoint set-up is if respondents are asked to choose between hypothetical candidates that have traits 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, thus biasing the results.

To address this concern, I included specific questions later in the survey to assess the prevalence of the two candidate traits that, in this setting, could potentially be unrealistic to voters. 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?” 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.¹¹

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ The two questions in the series began with the statement, “Now try to remember all of the mayors that you have had in your district.” In Spanish: “*Ahora trate de recordar todos los alcaldes que han habido en su distrito.*” Then each of the two questions were asked. The questions read, in Spanish: “*¿Cuántos de estos alcaldes han construido obras públicas?*” “*¿Cuántos de estos alcaldes han ofrecido ayuda financiera cuando la población se los pidió por alguna emergencia familiar o de salud?*” Answer options for both questions: All; Majority; Half; Some; None. In Spanish: *Todos; Mayoría; Mitad; Algunos; Ninguno.*

Table 4.3 shows responses to the two questions across the full sample. We would be worried about the hypothetical candidates being unrealistic if the vast majority of respondents reported that either ‘all’ or ‘none’ of the mayors implemented the two types of 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 a mayoral incumbent who either did or did not provide 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 qualitative interviews suggested the practice was widespread. To assess this possibility, I included the following question later in the survey: “Think about the last election in October 2014 for district mayor. How many of the candidates gave out gifts as part of their campaigning, such as at rallies or meetings?”¹² Again, the distribution of responses suggests that candidates that both offer and do not offer gifts are realistic, as Table 4.4 shows.

¹² In Spanish: *Piense en las elecciones para el alcalde distrital de Octubre del 2014. ¿Cuántos candidatos a la alcaldía distrital ofrecieron regalos como parte de su campaña, por ejemplo, en sus mítines o en sus reuniones?* Answer options: All; Majority; Half; Some; None. In Spanish: *Todos; Mayoría; Mitad; Algunos; Ninguno.*

Table 4.3: 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 4.4: 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.

4.2 Choosing a Challenger Over an Incumbent Who Performed Well

The most noteworthy—and indeed, surprising—results of the conjoint experiment have to do with how respondents view high performing incumbents. As would be expected from standard models of voting behavior, respondents do prefer challengers over incumbents who performed poorly in office. However, what runs counter to existing accounts is that respondents also chose challengers over incumbents who performed well, and this holds for both of the performance indicators. Relative to

the other traits, incumbency also has a much larger impact on respondents' choice between the two candidates.

Figure 4.1 depicts these main results. The points on the plot show the point estimates of the effect of each candidate attribute on the probability of a candidate with that attribute being selected. Using the terminology of Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014), this 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. For each candidate characteristic, one of the values is set as the baseline against which the other values are compared. The interpretation of the AMCE estimate is the change in the probability that a candidate 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 B.2 presents the point estimates and p-values for each trait.

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. To generate this estimate, the AMCE method calculates the difference in the estimated probability of being selected between a challenger (the baseline condition) and an incumbent with no performance information when the candidate is female versus male, when the candidate is a farmer versus a business owner, and so on for each of the other candidate traits, then takes the average of all of those estimated probabilities. If incumbency only impacted vote choice when the candidate was, for example, female versus male, but did not matter at all when the candidate had the other tested traits, then the effect among female

Political Dynasty:
 (Baseline = Uncle was mayor)
 First in family to run

Gender:
 (Baseline = male)
 female

Gifts in Campaign:
 (Baseline = Never gives gifts at campaign events)
 Gives gifts at campaign events

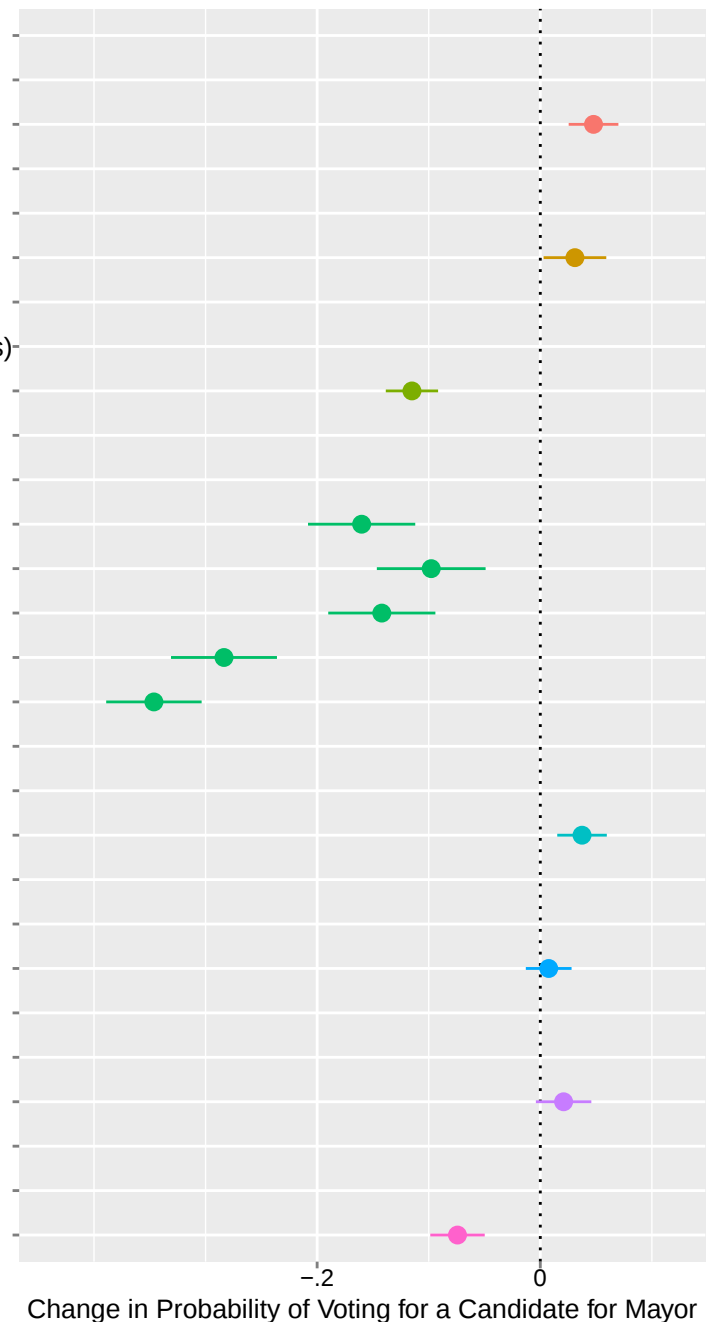
Incumbency Status:
 (Baseline = Challenger)
 Incumbent – no performance info
 Incumbent – good performance – public works
 Incumbent – good performance – fin aid
 Incumbent – bad performance – fin aid
 Incumbent – bad performance – public works

Ethnicity/First Language:
 (Baseline = Spanish)
 Quechua

Social Organizations:
 (Baseline = No)
 Yes

Village:
 (Baseline = Village 2 hours away)
 Same village

Work/Wealth:
 (Baseline = Farmer)
 Business owner



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 4.1: Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Probability of Receiving Respondents’ Vote

candidates would be washed out by the null effect of the other traits. An overall effect, as is the case with each incumbency condition, suggests that the effect holds across a large range of values of the other candidate traits, and thus portrays a more universally held preference among respondents.

The results for each type of incumbency condition—no information, good performance and bad performance respectively—offer distinct insights into how voters view incumbents. The difference between how respondents rate challengers versus incumbents when they have no information about how the incumbent performed best approximates voters’ generalized attitude toward incumbents. If voters see incumbency itself as something of value, if they have a generally positive view of politicians, if they perceive experience on the job as something positive, then they would on average prefer a generic incumbent to a challenger. With no priors about incumbents, the effect would be zero, meaning respondents would choose between the candidates based on one or more of the other traits. But if they view incumbents with disdain, if they question politicians and what they learn on the job, then on average the challenger would be preferred to the no-information incumbent. This is what we see in the case of Peru.

For the conditions where incumbent performance is revealed, if electoral accountability was working as assumed, we would expect to see respondents both punish poorly performing incumbents *and* reward high-performing incumbents.¹³ For the incumbents who performed poorly, this is what we see in the results. Being an incumbent who did not deliver on public works projects and an incumbent who did not provide individual financial help to constituents caused respondents to be even less likely to choose the candidate over the challenger.

¹³ This is the expectation recorded in the Pre-Analysis Plan registered prior to the survey being fielded: <http://egap.org/registration/2762>.

For the positive performance conditions, however, we see a surprising result. If voters rewarded good performers, then the point estimates on the two good performance conditions should be significant and positive. In other words, being told the incumbent performed well should push respondents to select the incumbent over the challenger at a much higher rate. If positive information about performance did not matter much to voters, for example, if what really impacted vote choice was some other candidate trait, then we would expect a null result. Given that the results for the ‘no information’ condition suggested a generalized bias against incumbents, a null result in this case would actually suggest that information about good performance did push the needle on voters’ views of incumbents. Rather than being biased against incumbency, good performance would make respondents neutral between incumbents and challengers.

Instead, we see that respondents actually respond to good performance negatively. Respondents are still significantly more likely to choose the challenger candidate in the pair even when they are explicitly told that the incumbent performed well in office. While it is true that strong performing incumbents faced a smaller penalty than poorly performing ones, in the sense that the negative effects (point estimates) are smaller for the two good performance conditions than for the two poor ones, they faced the penalty nonetheless. Furthermore, recall that the randomization was constrained such that respondents always saw one challenger paired with one incumbent. For this reason, it is substantively meaningless to consider, for example, that an incumbent with good performance would be preferred to an incumbent with bad performance. Instead, the correct interpretation is that though a bad performing incumbent faces a greater electoral penalty than a good performing incumbent, they both face a penalty regardless.

The results also largely complement the findings of the incumbency disad-

vantage presented in the previous chapter, though the conjoint and RDD do measure different aspects of that 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 the respondent may imagine any type of challenger, either a career politician in her third election or a political novice. This means 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. The conjoint experiment, as well as the results from an extension of the RDD set-up described in Section 4, then adds the additional finding that not only is there an incumbency disadvantage, but good performance is not enough to help incumbents overcome it.

4.2.1 Comparing Results Across Voting Models

Comparing predictions from other models of voting versus the actual results found here helps to highlight the ways these findings are inconsistent with existing approaches. Returning to the testable implications of my theory versus the two main alternative accounts, I first consider the question of the most important determinant of vote choice in re-elections (Column D of Table 2.2 in Chapter 2). The conjoint experiment is particularly useful in shedding light on this question because it allows for comparing the importance of one candidate trait to another simply by comparing the estimated effect sizes. If the absolute value of the effect of one candidate trait is larger than all others, we can infer that that trait is the most important to voters when they make voting decisions.

In the first standard account of voting, where lack of access to performance

information is seen as the principal constraint on voter sanctioning, we would expect that incumbent performance would be the most important determinant of vote choice, as long as respondents have perfect performance information, which the conjoint does provide. If that were the case, respondents would need to both punish poor performance *and* reward good performance. The point estimates on the good performance conditions would need to be positive and significant and those of bad performance would need to be negative and significant. Furthermore, in order to conclude that performance is the most important candidate trait, the point estimates would need to be greater in magnitude than the estimates for all other traits. As described extensively above, this is not what the data shows.

In identity-based voting, partisan or ethnic loyalty outweigh other factors when voters head to the ballot box. Party polarization is not relevant in this context, so is not explicitly tested here, but the candidate ethnicity trait can help us assess whether ethnic loyalty is conditioning vote choice. If this model of voting held, we would expect to see both that the ethnicity of the candidate impacts respondent preferences, through a positive and significant point estimate, but also that that estimate is greater in absolute value than any other trait. Results in Figure 4.1 do show that respondents prefer candidates whose first language is Quechua. More importantly, the effect is slightly greater among only those respondents who also self-report Quechua as their first language, as Appendix Figure D.5 shows.¹⁴ This suggests that Quechua speaking respondents do give an electoral premium to Quechua speaking candidates. However, the effect of language is small, .037 across the full sample and .045 among Quechua speaking respondents, compared to the incumbency conditions, with effect sizes that range from -.098 to -.346. Ethnicity, while somewhat important

¹⁴ Results that are disaggregated across a set of respondent characteristics are explored further in the next sub-section.

in this context, is certainly not the most important determinant of vote choice.

In my account of an electoral dis-connection, incumbency status, though not incumbent performance, is the most important determinant of vote choice. The fact that all incumbency conditions have negative and significant point estimates suggests that incumbency status impacts voter behavior, and particularly that good performance does not allow incumbents to overcome voter disdain. But the results also suggest that incumbency is the most important determinant of vote choice, 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.

The second testable implication addresses the expected effect of providing voters with improved information about incumbent performance (Column E of Table 2.2). Again, the conjoint offers a strong test of this contention precisely because it experimentally controls respondents' access to such information. By comparing the point estimates across the three types of incumbent performance conditions (no information and information about good and bad performance respectively), we can infer how changes in access to information impact vote choice.

If, as the first standard account posits, the failure of electoral accountability is due to a performance information constraint, alleviating that constraint should lead to voter sanctioning. In this approach, then, we would expect a large impact on vote choice of going from having no performance information to having either positive or negative information. We would therefore expect to see a statistically significant difference between how respondents' choose between the incumbent and the challenger when they are told nothing about the incumbent's performance, versus when they are given information. In particular, we would expect a significant increase in their preference for incumbents when informed the incumbent performed well, and

a large and significant decrease in their preference for incumbents when told they performed poorly.

Since identity dominates voter preferences in the second account, we would expect that any response to incumbent performance information would depend on the congruence between the respondents' and candidates' identity. For example, we would expect that respondents are willing to overlook bad incumbent performance from a co-ethnic, but sanction poorly-performing incumbents when they do not share an ethnicity. However, even when respondents shared the ethnicity of the incumbent, they were still more likely to prefer the challenger.

Indeed, the findings from the conjoint experiment differ from the expectations of voter behavior in both of these accounts. In fact, we see that performance information has no impact in shifting voter support from the challenger to the incumbent. Information does not lead to voter sanctioning, as the first account would predict, nor does it have an impact even when mediated through ethnicity, as the second account would expect. Instead, respondents continue to prefer challengers, as they do with no information, when given either positive or negative performance information, and incumbency status is the most important determinant of their choice between the candidates.

4.2.2 Robustness Checks

The main results, in which respondents prefer challengers even over incumbents who perform well, are robust to a series of checks standard for conjoint experiments, as the graphs and tables in Appendix C show. First, respondents were shown four different pairs of candidates and asked to select their preferred candidate for mayor after each pair (or task, in the language of conjoint experiments). One concern

is therefore whether there are carryover effects, meaning respondents' preferences for candidate attributes change across rounds of questions. Appendix Figure C.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. Appendix Figure C.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, Appendix Table C.1 shows the frequency distributions of each of the candidate traits across the sample, which match the randomization constraints described above. 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 Appendix Table C.2 show separate regressions of each candidate trait on the five respondent traits. An omnibus F-test is insignificant, meaning the candidate traits are jointly insignificant in each of the five respondent trait models, suggesting there was no pattern or skewing in terms of certain respondents seeing certain types of candidates more frequently than others.

Though not a robustness check per se, one additional concern is that the results are driven by certain segments of the population, rather than reflecting views that are widely held. The conjoint design allows for specifically testing whether rejection of incumbents varies according to the characteristics of the respondent. I find strong evidence that the preference for challengers even over high performing

incumbents holds across the subsets of the respondents tested. I divided the sample by different respondent characteristics and re-ran the conjoint analysis, in order to see if different ‘types’ of respondents had different responses. The figures in Appendix D show these estimated conditional effects for six different respondent characteristics. The first is the type of municipality in which the respondent lives, corresponding to the four municipal types employed in the stratified sampling design. The other respondent characteristics tested are the five socioeconomic variables gathered in the survey: gender, income, first language, education, and age. As the figures show, there is no difference in terms of support for incumbent candidates either across the four municipal types (Figures D.1 and D.2), between male and female respondents (Figure D.3) or between respondents above and below the mean income (Figure D.4).

There are only slight differences in terms of first language, education and age. For respondents whose first language is Spanish (Figure D.5), they are indifferent between the challengers and good performers (in other words, they do not punish good performers, but they do not reward them either). Respondents with primary education are indifferent between challengers and incumbents who perform well in terms of public works (not for financial assistance), but otherwise, the results are identical across the three levels of education (Figure D.6). For age, the effect of punishing good performers held for the categories 31-45 and 46-70 years old, while respondents in the 18-30 category were indifferent between challengers and good performers (Figure D.7). On the whole, then, while there are a few differences in preferences across groups, the anti-incumbency bias and preference for challengers even over incumbents who performed well seems to be generalized across the surveyed population.

4.3 Performance and the Incumbency Disadvantage

Compared to observational data, the conjoint experiment offers a number of advantages, not least of which is the ability to directly control respondents' access to information about performance, and to tests aspects of performance which matter to voters. In the real world, we cannot be sure that all voters are equally and fully informed about how an incumbent performed, and we lack data on certain types of performance, such as providing individual financial assistance, that may strongly impact vote choice. Accepting those limitations, at the same time real-world records of how people vote provide direct evidence of voter preferences, and as such, offer an important complementary test of how voters respond to incumbents who perform well when they actually enter the ballot box.

In this section, I turn to election returns data as a second method for examining whether voters reward good performance, by assessing the extent to which performing well in office helps incumbents mediate the incumbency disadvantage. Consistent with the results from the conjoint experiment, I find that even good performance does not allow incumbents to overcome voter bias. In other words, the incumbency disadvantage holds whether or not the incumbent performed well. Together, then, the fact that both experimental and observational data come to the same conclusions provides strong support for the findings related to performance and an electoral dis-connection in Peru.

As was discussed at length in the previous chapter, merely studying how incumbents fare in their re-election bid is problematic because the characteristics that catapulted them to victory in the first place might make them different from challengers in ways that have nothing to do with incumbency and yet impact their re-election prospects. Instead, I return to the regression discontinuity design (RDD)

I used to study the incumbency disadvantage, and the dataset of barely-won incumbents and barely-lost challengers, again assuming that the win or loss is as-if-random because it was so close. This gives me a group of incumbents and challengers who are essentially the same, except that the barely-won candidates enjoyed a term in office and are running now as incumbents.

I can then modify the RDD set-up from before to test not only how incumbents perform in the subsequent election compared to challengers, but also to disaggregate between different types of incumbents to study differential effects. In this way, I can assess whether good performance allows incumbents to mediate the pernicious electoral effects of incumbency.

I combine the RDD dataset with data on measures of incumbent performance and use a heterogeneous treatment effects design to test for whether strong performing incumbents face the same incumbency disadvantage as poor performers. I perform the following local linear regression, including the triple interaction between the treatment variable (incumbent), forcing variable (vote share margin in the previous election) and the relevant performance metric (X), as well as all lower order interactions:

$$y_d = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{incumbent}_d + \beta_2 \text{forcing}_d + \beta_3 X + \beta_4 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot \text{forcing}_d + \beta_5 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot X \\ + \beta_6 \text{forcing}_d \cdot X + \beta_7 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot \text{forcing}_d \cdot X + \epsilon_d$$

The coefficient of interest is β_5 , the coefficient for the interaction term between incumbency and performance. If significant, it would suggest heterogeneity in the incumbency effect in terms of that aspect of performance. For example, if the coefficient on the interaction term ‘Incumbent X Public Works Performance’ was significant and positive, it would suggest that while incumbents are disadvantaged

on average, those who perform well in implementing public works projects enjoy a higher probability of getting re-elected relative to challengers than those who perform poorly.

I use four different measures to test whether incumbent performance alleviates the incumbency disadvantage, all of which have been standardized (mean of zero and standard deviation of 1) to facilitate comparison. First, I include whether Peru's conditional cash transfer program, called JUNTOS, was added during the incumbent's term. Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, born in Latin America and now common throughout the developing world, provide families with a monthly income subsidy as long as they meet certain benchmarks like sending their children to school or to regular health check-ups. Unlike some other aspects of performance, such as creating efficiencies in spending or reducing corruption, which are often hidden or hard to detect, adding a CCT program 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).

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 0.¹⁵ 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.

Second, I test for performance in terms of spending on 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).¹⁶ Furthermore, results from the survey, described above, show how basically all respondents (95.6%) describe providing public works projects as a very important or important responsibility of the mayor. In a different survey question, respondents were 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.

A wealth of information on budgeting and spending is available from the

¹⁵ Data received from the JUNTOS program in March 2016.

¹⁶ In an interesting finding, Johannessen (2019) actually demonstrates that though voters sanction based on spending on visible public works projects, in surveys they report that their preference is actually for education and health outcomes over public works projects, thereby calling into question whether electoral sanctioning is actually producing the policies voters desire.

Ministry of Finance (*Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas*), including data broken down by type of expense and covering both transfers from the center and the percent of the transfer that was actually spent.¹⁷ As a measure of performance in implementing public works projects, I include for each municipality the average public works budget spent during the incumbent's administration. The data suggest, unsurprisingly, that mayors tend to spend much more in their last year in office, but since public works projects take a long time to build, and to better gauge performance over time, I use the average across years. The budgeting data only becomes available in 2008, which means that for the 2010 election, I can only use spending data from the last three years of the administration (2008-2010), not the full four. To make the data comparable across elections, I also only use the last three years' spending data for the 2014 election, even though all four years are available. Unfortunately the data is not available for the 2006 election.

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, as the long literature on economic voting asserts. 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 (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática* - INEI), the HDI for every district is calculated for 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2012.¹⁸ The HDI years do not match up perfectly with election years: for the 2006 election, I used the difference between a

¹⁷ Data available online at: <http://apps5.mineco.gob.pe/transparencia/Navegador/default.aspx>.

¹⁸ Data available online at: <http://www.pe.undp.org/content/peru/es/home/library/poverty/Informesobredesarrollohumano2013/IDHPeru2013.html> (Downloaded 10 March 2016).

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, in a direct measure of citizen satisfaction with mayoral performance, 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 (ENAH0 - *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 (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática*).¹⁹ The survey includes a series of questions asking respondents to rate the performance of different levels of government (national, regional, provincial and municipal).²⁰ I create a district average of responses to the question about the municipal level. The question is only available beginning in 2011, so it can only be tested with data from the 2014 election.

As the results, depicted in Table 4.5, suggest, performing well in these four measures of performance does not appear to give incumbents any electoral benefit to help overcome their incumbency disadvantage. In other words, both good and bad performing incumbents face the same voter bias compared to challengers. None of the four measures of mayoral performance are statistically significant. With the exception of the test on survey responses assessing municipal performance (Column 4), which only uses data from one election, the other regressions are performed on between 5000 and 9000 observations, suggesting the lack of significance is not due to small sample size. Furthermore, the coefficients themselves are quite small, especially when compared to the effect size for the incumbency disadvantage itself.

¹⁹ Data available online at: http://inei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/Consulta_por_Encuesta.asp.

²⁰ In Spanish, the question reads: *En su opinión, la gestión del gobierno local distrital es...?* The answer options are: Very good; Good; Bad; Very bad; Don't know/Don't answer.

Table 4.5: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Incumbent Performance

	DV: Candidate Won Election			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Incumbent	-0.278*** (0.022)	-0.288*** (0.024)	-0.248*** (0.019)	-0.357*** (0.049)
Voteshare Margin Previous	3.113*** (0.235)	2.984*** (0.261)	2.898*** (0.196)	3.380*** (0.576)
Incumbent X Voteshare Margin Previous	-2.591*** (0.313)	-2.448*** (0.337)	-2.196*** (0.270)	-2.593*** (0.655)
Incumbent X CCT Added	-0.033 (0.021)			
Incumbent X Publ 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*** (0.015)	0.407*** (0.016)	0.371*** (0.013)	0.462*** (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.

Of course, this lack of a relationship between good performance and re-election 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 experiment's main finding that, paradoxically, voters punish even good performing incumbents.

4.4 Conclusion

The two chapters in Part I of this manuscript presented evidence for the existence of a breakdown in Peru's electoral connection. Benchmarked against Mayhew's conception of how the voter-politician link creates the opportunity for political accountability, Peru's electoral accountability deficit becomes clear. Incumbent mayors seem less interested in seeking re-election, and even if they do run, their likelihood of winning is small. Unlike in other countries, where incumbents can capitalize on their time in office to give themselves an advantage in their re-election campaign, Peruvian voters seem to systematically favor challengers, so much so that they even prefer making it impossible for mayors to seek re-election in the first place.

Of course, if good performers were still rewarded, then these constraints to electoral accountability could be overcome. Despite a low likelihood of winning re-election on average, if incumbents still perceived an electoral pay-off to good performance, it would incentivize their efforts to satisfy voters. But as the evidence in this chapter showed, good performance is not enough to help incumbents overcome voter bias to get themselves re-elected. Indeed, voter disdain for incumbents is so strong it translates into a preference for challengers over good and bad performing incumbents alike.

Why might this be the case? If the electoral connection is what makes electoral accountability possible, then why would Peruvian voters reject good performers and ban re-election overall? The chapters in Part II of this manuscript set forth the evidence for my main argument about why the electoral connection has broken down: weak institutions of horizontal accountability.

| Part II: Explaining the Electoral Disconnection

5 | Testing the Micro-foundations: Voter Attitudes about Incumbents and Second-Term Performance

That voters would use performance in office, particularly good performance, as an indicator of the likelihood an incumbent would continue to perform well if re-elected, is often taken as a given in much political science research. In fact, a set of core voter beliefs about incumbents and the institution of re-election, such as a desire to reward and support for the option of seeking a second term, is implicit in models of voter behavior and electoral accountability, yet their existence is often assumed rather than explicitly tested. The main argument I put forth in this project is that weak oversight institutions, when combined with nonexistent political parties, generate certain voter attitudes—skepticism about politicians’ intrinsic motivation and incumbents’ external constraints, and doubt about the prospects of incumbents performing well if re-elected—that are poorly explained by dominant approaches to understanding voter behavior and motivations in re-election. Importantly, I argue that these attitudes ultimately impact downstream voter behavior, leading to a breakdown in the electoral connection between voters and politicians.

Part I of the manuscript presented evidence for that electoral dis-connection in one particular setting of weak parties and ineffective government oversight. In Peru, we saw a bias against incumbents, preference for challengers even over incumbents

who perform well, and a rejection of the very idea of re-election itself. Divided into two chapters, Part II maps out the evidence in support of my theory explaining why the electoral connection broke down. Strong political parties can play an important role in maintaining the electoral connection, particularly by ensuring voters are willing to at least entertain the idea of re-electing incumbents. However, where parties are weak, I contend that the electoral connection can become vulnerable to breakdown unless systems of governmental oversight are sufficiently strong.

In particular, I argue that ineffective horizontal accountability weakens the electoral connection due to its impact on politicians' behavior in office and the subsequent effect of that behavior on voter perceptions. Research suggests that strong oversight can play an important role in incentivizing politicians to behave in office, with the corollary implication that weak oversight makes poor performance more likely. As voters see more and more elected officials performing poorly, they begin to question the inherent drive of politicians and doubt their internal motivation to perform well. If oversight were strong enough, then even politicians without intrinsic motivation could be induced to perform well to avoid the risk of sanctions. However, for incumbents in particular, weak oversight impacts how voters perceive the external constraints on their performance as well. When horizontal accountability is frail, learning on the job can be seen as leading not to better performance, but to worse performance over time. Incumbents are assumed to spend their first term in office learning how to circumvent the very government systems designed to oversee their behavior, becoming better able to both shirk, or not expend the necessary effort to provide the public goods and services voters desire, and engage in corruption. Where oversight is weak, voters are more likely to assume incumbents will act on their new knowledge precisely because there are no effective sanctions to deter them. For incumbents, then, weak oversight precipitates a questioning of both their

internal motivation and the external constraints on their behavior in a second term. This questioning leads to voter skepticism about the performance of incumbents if re-elected, which I argue generates the electoral dis-connection described at length in Part I.

As this brief summary of my argument should make clear, the role of voter attitudes is crucial in driving forward the electoral dis-connection, and is the focus of this first chapter in Part II. The following chapter presents evidence about the impact of oversight institutions, not only in generating these perceptions, but also in overcoming them to re-establish an electoral connection and to facilitate electoral accountability more broadly.

The evidence I present follows the key steps of my theory presented in Figure 2.1 of Chapter 2. Figure 5.1 reproduces the original chart with additional blue outlines around the steps in the argument that will be tested in this chapter. Drawing on existing and original survey data, I begin by presenting evidence suggesting that voters hold the three key attitudes that I argue underpin the electoral dis-connection: disdain for politicians overall (Box A in Figure 5.1); belief that malfeasance increases overtime due to politicians learning on the job (Box B); and, as a result of these two perceptions, doubt that good incumbent performance will be repeated if re-elected (Box C).

In the second half of the chapter, I turn to the evidence that these attitudes do in fact lead to the electoral dis-connection behavior that I documented in Part I (represented by the arrows leading to Box D in Figure 5.1). First, I use regression analysis with detailed data on candidates and electoral returns to show that voters prefer challengers who have never held office before, which is consistent with voter worry about the skills politicians develop when they serve as elected officials. Then, I return to the methodology of the conjoint experiment presented in Chapter 4, and

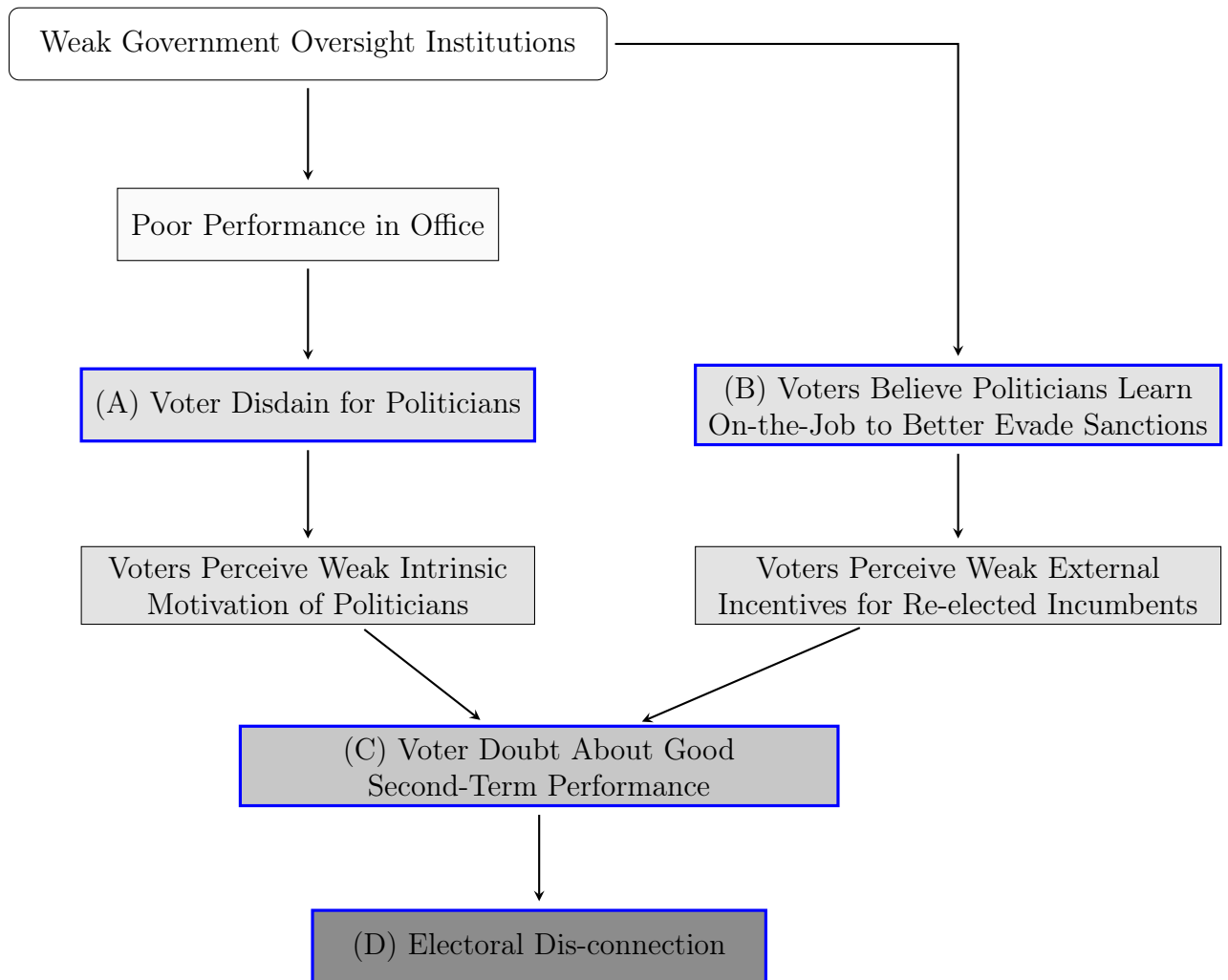


Figure 5.1: Testing the Theory of How Poor Oversight Generates an Electoral dis-connection

use additional questions from the survey to assess how respondents' preferences for candidates varies according to their political attitudes. The results suggest that the desire to punish incumbents who perform well is concentrated among respondents who believe politicians learn how to successfully engage in misconduct in their first term, and who doubt good performance in a first term would be repeated in a second. Finally, drawing on results from qualitative interviews and my survey, I show how respondents describe these attitudes as the rationale for their desire to ban re-election. Overall, these findings provide strong support for the contention that the attitudes explored in the first part of the chapter underpin the electoral dis-connection voter behavior presented in Part I.

5.1 Voter Beliefs about Politicians, Political Learning and Likely Second Term Performance

Survey data can provide an interesting glimpse into how ordinary citizens view politicians, but the information that it generates depends on the question asked. Many of the attitudes that underpin voting behavior in re-elections are rarely examined directly. For example, voters are presumed to believe that if an incumbent performs well in a first term, she is likely to do so in a second, but this assumption is rarely explicitly tested. In this section, I present survey data on Peruvian voters' attitudes and beliefs, and in the process, demonstrate how some attitudes that conventional wisdom may take as universal actually might not hold everywhere. I begin with a more commonly assessed attitude, how voters view politicians on the whole, before turning to perspectives that are much less frequently studied: voters' opinions on the value of learning in office and on the likelihood good performance will

be repeated if incumbents are granted a subsequent term.

5.1.1 Voter Disdain for Politicians

A variety of different survey sources all provide complementary evidence about the extent to which Peruvians tend to view politicians on the whole with disdain. Indeed, the belief that politicians have an intrinsic motivation to serve seems to be the exception rather than the rule among Peruvian voters. In a 2011 survey from Peru’s National Institute for Statistics and Information,¹ respondents were asked about their opinion of politicians in general. They were given a set of answer options describing different characteristics of elected officials, and they could respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to each one. Remarkably, only 4.6% of the entire sample of almost 25,000 respondents reported believing that politicians cared about the population.²

More broadly, Peruvians seem to have very little trust in their public officials, particularly at the local-level. In the 2016/2017 edition of the LAPOP public opinion survey fielded across the Latin America region, only 36.4% of respondents reported having trust in their local government, the second lowest in the entire region (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017).

Peruvians also seem to assume that most politicians are corrupt. Again in the 2016/2017 LAPOP survey, respondents were asked how many politicians were involved in corruption.³ About a third (33.4%) said that *all* politicians were corrupt,

¹ 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/>

² The question read, ‘What is your opinion of politicians?’ The answer option reported here was, ‘They worry/care about the population.’ In Spanish: *¿Qué opina (piensa) Ud. de los políticos?* Answer: *Se preocupen por la población.*

³ The question read: Thinking of politicians in Peru, how many of them do you think are involved in corruption? In Spanish: *Pensando en los políticos de Perú, ¿Cuántos de ellos cree usted que están involucrados en corrupción?*. Answer options: None; Less than half; Half; More than half;

and 77% of Peruvians said more than half of all politicians engaged in corruption (Carrión et al. 2018). These responses gave Peru the 3rd highest rate across the region (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017).

In the qualitative interviews, the disdain for mayors was palpable. Not only were these local leaders largely deemed corrupt, they were often described as only caring for their home village, rather than the municipality as a whole, or catering only to the interests of the wealthy in the town. Interestingly, it was the case of the mayors that was seen as doing a truly good job that helps make this disdain and its link with intrinsic motivation clear. I chose one of the municipalities in part because the mayor was already on his third term. After weeks of interviews in other locations where mayors were decried, it was almost jarring to hear residents speak in such glowing terms of a politician. I asked each interviewee to explain why this mayor had done such a good job, and universally the reason was linked with his intrinsic motivation to serve. “He is a good person” “he cares about this community”; “he was born in this town and wants to see it grow”. But the mayor was also seen as the exception. “He is different” or “he is not like the others” were commonly added to assessments of his character.

5.1.2 Views on Incumbents: Political Learning and Doubt about Future Performance

The picture that emerges from these surveys and interviews is one in which voters have come to see a majority of politicians as lacking intrinsic motivation to serve, and particularly that politicians on the whole are corrupt. Though important, these are views about politicians in general, and as such, may not lead to an electoral

All. In Spanish: *Ninguno; Menos de la mitad; La mitad; Más de la mitad; Todos.*

dis-connection on their own. Indeed, voters may very well believe politicians lack an internal motivation to serve, but if they also perceive that the system of oversight is strong enough to rein them in, then they should have no problem re-electing politicians. However, Peruvians also have specific attitudes about incumbents that makes them weary of re-election, particularly a skepticism about their likelihood of performing well if re-elected and recognition that on-the-job learning makes external constraints on incumbents' behavior even less effective in subsequent terms.

Underpinning the logic of electoral accountability itself is the assumption that voters' perceive good performance in one term as indicative of a high likelihood of good performance in a second. Of course, part of the reason bad performance matters may very well be the desire to punish a poor performer out of anger. Still, part of the impulse to punish is that if a politician performed poorly, they should be prevented from serving—and thus continuing to perform poorly—in the future. Good performance is assumed to operate in the same way. Though part of the impetus to grant re-election may be a simple desire to reward a politician for a job well-done, in large part it is related to the belief that the politician should remain in office because they will perform similarly well in the future.

Though the link between current and future performance is crucial for electoral accountability to operate as theorized, this assumption is rarely explicitly tested. Results from qualitative interviews conducted across three different regions of Peru hinted that this assumption actually may not hold. To more systematically test the contention that voters believe good current performance predicts good future performance, I included a question in my survey asking respondents to rate the likelihood of good performance being repeated. The question read: Imagine that a mayor in

this district did a very good job in her⁴ first term in office. Then she is re-elected. How likely is it that she will also do a good job in her second term?⁵

As Figure 5.2 shows, the answers reflect a skepticism about incumbents repeating their good performance if re-elected. Recall the question asks not how any generic incumbent will perform if granted a second term, but specifies a *good* performer. Less than a majority (41.2%) see it as ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ that an incumbent who did a good job in office will continue to do so, with 57.89% responding ‘unlikely’, ‘very unlikely’ or ‘depends’. The question gets at the heart of why voters would be willing to give the incumbent another chance, and helps shed light on why the anti-incumbency bias exists: if people do not expect the re-elected mayor to perform well in a second term, then they are unlikely to reward her with one.

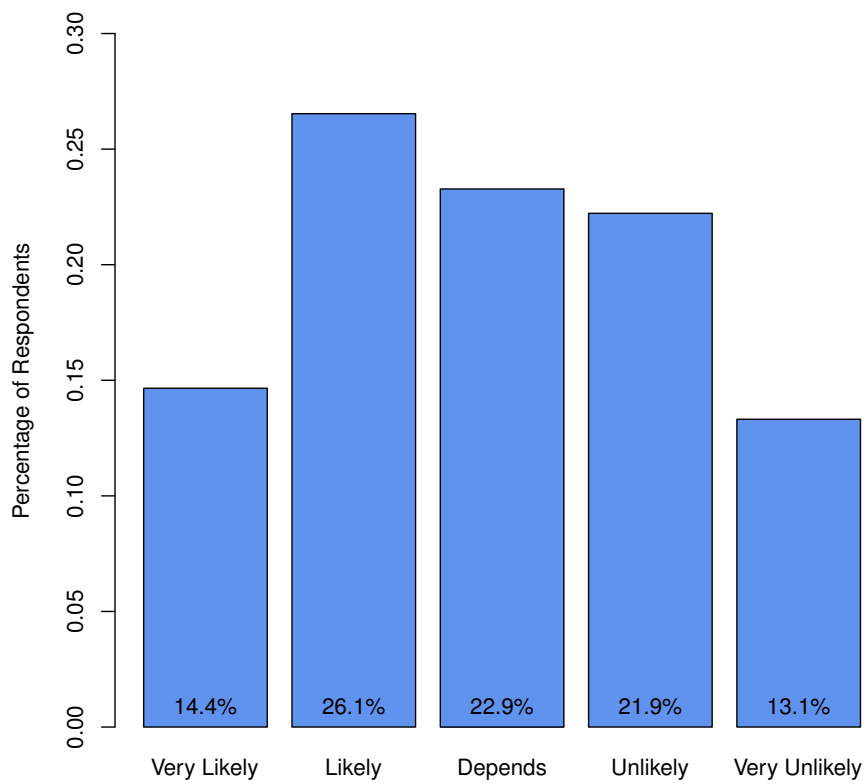
To understand why voters are skeptical about second term performance, respondents who answered ‘unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’ were then asked ‘why’. The question was open ended, respondents could provide more than one answer, and enumerators were trained to classify their answers into predefined categories. The responses are summarized in Table 5.1.

A first key finding is related to my overall argument about weak accountability institutions, also discussed in further detail in the next chapter, which is that a large set of respondents described a perceived weakness in the institutions of oversight as the reason that current and future performance had become decoupled. As the Table shows, almost a quarter of respondents (23.5%) believe that there is not sufficient oversight to ensure mayors will do a good job.

Next, the qualitative interviews had already suggested that many voters have

⁴ In Spanish, the gender of the mayor is not conveyed.

⁵ In Spanish: *Imagine que un alcalde de este distrito hace realmente un MUY BUEN trabajo en su primer periodo. Luego es re-elegido. ¿Qué tan probable es que también haga un buen trabajo en su segundo periodo?* Answer options: Very likely; Likely; Depends; Unlikely; Very unlikely.



Results from original survey of 1061 respondents. 'No response' and 'Don't Know' responses removed.

Figure 5.2: If a Mayor Does a Good Job in Office and is Re-elected, How Likely Will He/She Do a Good Job in a Second Term?

Table 5.1: Why do you believe a mayor who did a good job in their first period and is re-elected will *not* do a good job in the second period?

They learn how to be corrupt in the first period	53.4%
No one will oversee them to ensure they do a good job	23.5%
Get tired of being mayor and want to do something else	8.9%
Don't want to run for a 3rd time so won't do a good job	3.5%
Other	2.4%

Note: Rounded to tenth of a percent. Respondents may offer more than one response, so percentages do not add to 100.

a negative view of on-the-job learning and that this impacted their assessment of the probability that a re-elected incumbent would perform well in a subsequent term. Time and again, when asked why they thought future performance by an incumbent would be poor, respondents said “*aprenden a ser corruptos*,” or “they learn how to be corrupt.” Asked to explain what they meant, interviewees described how during a mayor’s first term in office, he or she was still learning the accounting and reporting systems, whereas if given a second term, the mayor would have learned enough to be able to engage in corruption without getting caught.

As emphasized earlier, my view on performance is that it is not equated only with corruption, and in fact, the risk of second-term performance being poor exists in terms of both shirking and engaging in malfeasance. While the vast majority of interviewees described the on-the-job learning in terms of corruption, it is perhaps not surprising given the extent of respondents’ worry about malfeasance. In theory, however, learning could be about how to shirk and get away with it, not just about engaging in corruption per se. The point overall is about learning how to evade detection and sanctions.

Because of the prevalence of this belief about political learning, I included it

as one of the possible answers to the question about why good first term performance would not be repeated. Half of all respondents (53.4%) report their belief that mayors learn how to be corrupt in their first period, which they then carry over into the second, making it the single most common answer by far. Recall again that these are free answers. Respondents were not shown a possible answer of ‘increasing corruption over time’, but rather, they offered it freely. The fact that half of all respondents reported this belief shows not only its prevalence within the population. Importantly, it also demonstrates the link between a suspicion of increasing malfeasance across terms and voters’ doubt that good performance will continue overtime.

Furthermore, the power of these attitudes is backed up by the fact that Peruvians on the whole are worried about the problem of corruption. 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). Perhaps even more importantly, evidence suggests corruption is seen as an urgent problem needing to be resolved. In my survey, 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.⁶

In summary, evidence suggests the prevalence of voters’ belief that incumbents learn on-the-job about how to evade government oversight over their behavior, and as a result, voters are skeptical that good behavior in the first term accurately predicts good behavior in subsequent terms. Importantly, the existence of these attitudes runs counter to what would be predicted in two main accounts of voter behavior in

⁶ In Spanish: *Qué tan grave problema diría usted que es la corrupción, comparándola con otros problemas en la gestión del gobierno municipal?* The four response options were: Not a problem; Small problem; Big problem but not the biggest; The biggest problem. In Spanish: *No es un problema; Pequeño problema; Gran problema pero no el mayor; El mayor problema.*

re-elections, which were summarized in Chapter 2 Table 2.1. In the first account, if electoral accountability is constrained principally due to problems with accessing and using information about performance, then voters should want to reward good performance if they are able to identify it as such. However, this desire to reward is inconsistent with voters both believing in the negative effects of political learning and questioning whether good performance would be repeated if incumbents were re-elected.

In the second account, identity-based voting, it is generally assumed that voters support co-partisans and co-ethnics because that shared identity is associated with politicians' performing in line with voters' desires, for example, because of ideological congruence or favoritism to their group. Since this shared identity does not change over time, voter assessments of the likelihood of good behavior across terms should be constant, and should hold whether or not voters believe incumbents learn how to circumvent governmental controls while on the job. Overall, then, this suggests that the political beliefs prevalent in the Peruvian context reflect a different logic of voting than what standard models would predict, but one that is consistent with the theoretical argument I provide in my account of the electoral dis-connection.

5.2 The Impact of Attitudes on Voting Behavior

While voter attitudes are interesting in and of themselves, I argue that their importance lies in the way they shape voter behavior. The previous section presented evidence suggesting that Peruvian voters exhibit political perceptions that are largely inconsistent with existing frameworks for explaining political behavior. The remainder of this chapter links those voter perceptions with actual voter behavior. I focus, first, on voters' rejection of incumbents in favor of challengers; second, on the

tendency to vote out even those incumbents who performed well in office; and finally, on voters' rejection of politicians' right to run for re-election. As I will show, in all three cases, beliefs about a low likelihood that good performance will be repeated and about the negative effects of learning on the job have a key role to play in generating these political behaviors.

5.2.1 The Incumbency Disadvantage and Preferences for Challengers

In Chapter 3, I showed how, in contrast to advanced democracies that tend to exhibit an incumbency advantage, Peruvian mayors faced an incumbency *dis*-advantage. Not only are mayors unable to marshal the benefits of office to help them win re-election, being the incumbent actually seems to lower their chances of winning compared to challengers. To delve further into voters' rationale for rejecting incumbents, this section makes use of detailed data on electoral returns and individual candidates to explore the characteristics of the challengers that are able to beat incumbents who seek re-election.

I find that voters not only strongly prefer challengers in general, but among challengers, they favor political outsiders in particular. I argue that this is exactly what we would predict to see in a context of electoral dis-connection. The reason why hinges on voters' beliefs about political learning. If learning in office is what generates worse performance in a second term, then voters should prefer political outsiders who have never before held office. Though they are not incumbents who have learned on the job in their first term as mayors, challenger candidates with experience as elected officials will have learned in whatever position they held. Similarly, challengers with official positions within parties would also be considered political insiders, and

voters could easily infer these candidates already have both the insider knowledge and political connections that facilitate increased corruption. As will be shown below, this is exactly what we see in the data: on average, the kinds of challengers that tend to beat incumbent mayors are political outsiders who have never held elected office and who have weak party ties.

This behavior is also not what we would predict from other standard accounts of voting behavior. Where rewarding and punishing is made difficult because of performance information constraints, there should be no on average preference for outsider challengers over political insiders. In identity-based voting, challengers who were party insiders would actually be preferred to party outsiders, not only where partisan loyalty dominates voter behavior, but also in settings of ethnic voting where ethnic parties may be common.

To assess the prediction about outsider challengers, I use detailed data on incumbent and challenger candidates and on electoral returns. All candidates running for elected office in Peru, including mayors, are required to submit to the National Elections Board (*Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* - JNE) a set of background information called an *hoja de vida*, similar to a curriculum vitae, which includes details 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.⁷ This has created a wealth of publicly available data about every candidate who runs for election. Though the candidate data is only available for two of the elections included in the study (2010 and 2014), it is quite complete for both

⁷ 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 *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* and was obtained through joint work with Miguel Ángel Carpio, Horacio Larreguy and Beatriz Córdova (Carpio et al. 2019).

of those years.

Analyzing patterns in the data can provide complementary evidence about voter preferences, in addition to the other types of quantitative analysis presented elsewhere in this study. As another tool for unpacking why voters prefer incumbents, I draw on this candidate dataset to understand the characteristics of the challengers who are able to beat incumbents. To do so, I constructed a dataset for 2010 and 2014 composed only of the challenger candidates that won elections and the incumbents they beat, only including races in which the incumbent ran for re-election. In other words, I begin only with districts where the incumbent chose to seek re-election and lost, then include in the final dataset only two candidates from each of those races: the winning challenger and the losing incumbent. I then use logit regression to identify the characteristics that distinguished challengers from the incumbents they were able to beat. The dependent variable is a binary for winning the election, but given that the only winners in the dataset are challengers, it also estimates differences between challenger and incumbent candidates.

Table 5.2 depicts the results. All of the variables have been standardized (mean of zero and standard deviation of 1) to facilitate comparison of the coefficients. The variables with statistical significance are those in which winning challengers on average differ from the incumbents they beat. It should be emphasized that these are only correlations. Still, they provide suggestive evidence of the types of characteristics that, on average, winning challengers share compared to incumbents that seek re-election and lose. The set of variables that are significant represent a package of characteristics that, taken together, suggest voters are more likely to vote for challengers over incumbents when the challengers are political outsiders.

Perhaps most striking, voters seem to opt for the challenger at the ballot box when that challenger has never before held office. The standardized coefficient on

Table 5.2: Characteristics of Challengers Who Beat Incumbents (2010 and 2014)

	DV: Won Election (Binary)
Female	0.029 (0.044)
National Party	0.008 (0.047)
Age	−0.319*** (0.050)
Education	0.060 (0.046)
Penal or Civil Charges	0.180*** (0.043)
Born in District	−0.127*** (0.048)
Years Residing in District	0.040 (0.051)
Held Position - Same Party	−0.259*** (0.055)
Held Position - Other Party	0.145*** (0.051)
Previously Elected - Any Office	−1.353*** (0.055)
Constant	0.048 (0.048)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	2,470

Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Dataset only includes races in which the incumbent ran. In those races, only challengers who won and incumbents who lost are included, such that the dependent variable ‘Won Election (Binary)’ refers to challengers who beat incumbents. District-level clustered standard errors reported. All variables have been standardized (mean of zero and standard deviation of 1).

the variable ‘Previously Elected - Any Office’ is also the largest coefficient in absolute value, more than four times that of the next largest statistically significant coefficient. This suggests that it is the most important determinant of vote choice, at least among the variables included in the analysis. The fact that voters prefer challengers who have never held elected office before is consistent with voters’ belief that malfeasance increases across terms. If challengers have already held some sort of elected office, then they already had the opportunity to learn on the job, making them just as undesirable as incumbents.

The variables related to holding a leadership position within a political party also shed light on how voters negatively view political insiders and experienced politicians. The variable ‘Held Position - Same Party’ refers to whether the candidate held a formal position with the party on which they are running for office. The fact that it is negative and significant suggests that voters prefer challengers who are less involved with their parties, meaning candidates who are more likely to be political outsiders rather than party insiders. In contrast, the variable ‘Held Position - Other Party’ refers to whether the candidate held a formal position with a party other than the one on which she is running. This variable thus picks up party switching and weaker ties to the candidate’s current party. Voters seem to prefer these kinds of challengers, also suggesting somewhat of a preference for outsiders versus established politicians with a history of running on the same party.

The remaining variables have less clear-cut interpretations. Voters also prefer challengers when they are younger, perhaps again reflecting a preference for challengers with less experience. One may think that better educated challengers might be more capable and thus more likely to perform better, but education levels do not differ significantly between winning challengers and losing incumbents. Surprisingly, voters prefer challengers who were not born in the municipality in which they are

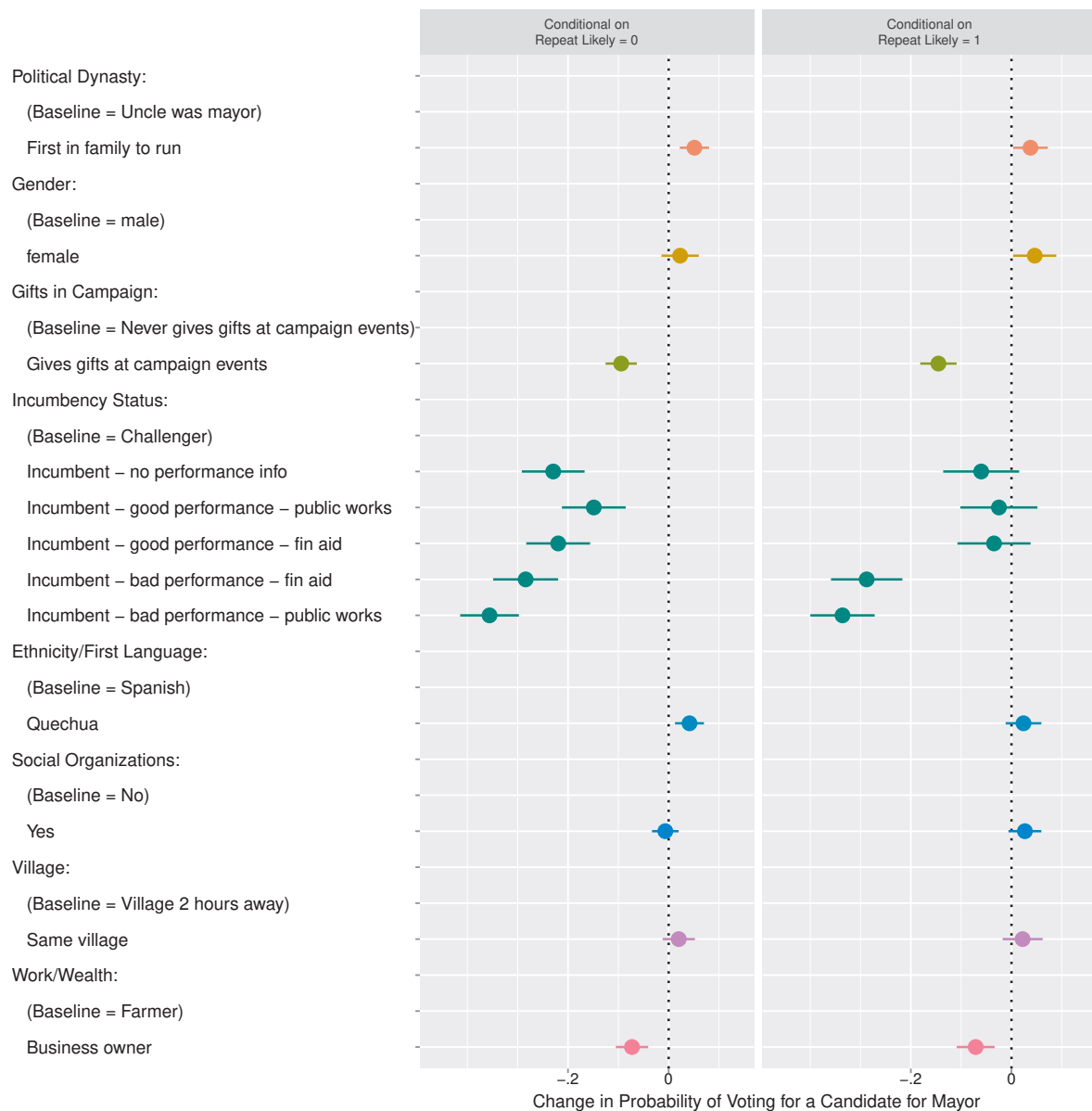
running, which could be linked with a preference for outsiders, although the length of time they have resided in the municipality is not significant. Finally, and surprisingly, winning challengers are actually more likely to have pending penal or civil charges than losing incumbents.

5.2.2 Rejecting Even Strong Performing Incumbents

I turn now to testing the link between voter attitudes and an additional example of the political behavior associated with an electoral dis-connection. One of the most significant findings presented in Part I is that voters seem to prefer challengers even over incumbents who did a good job in office. I return to these results and take advantage of other questions within my survey to test, and ultimately provide support for, my argument that two underlying voter attitudes described extensively above—the questioning of whether good performance in one term will be repeated in another and belief in incumbent learning on-the-job about how to engage in malfeasance—drive voters’ rejection of even strong performing incumbents.

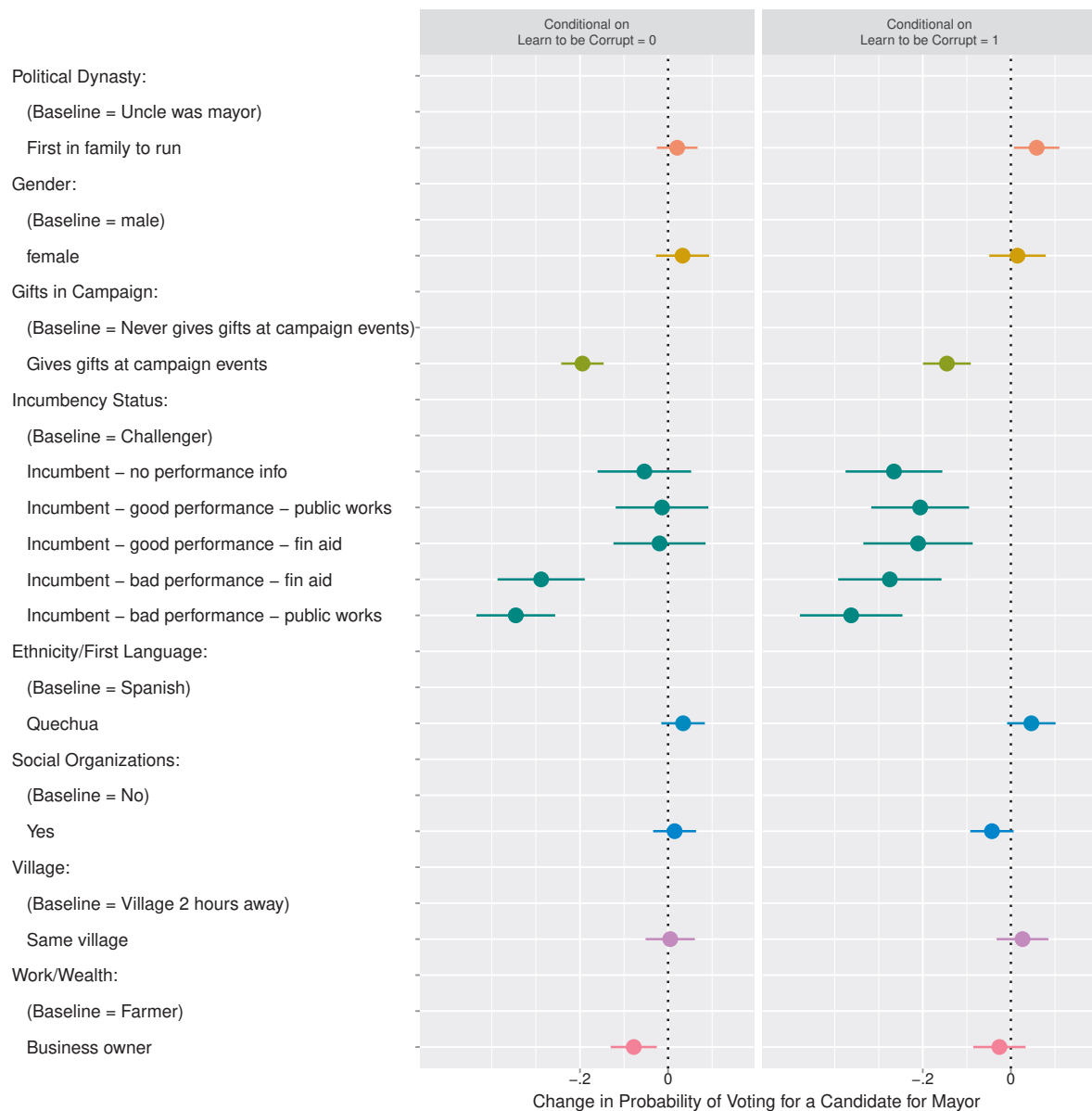
As part of the findings that voters reject even incumbents who performed well, Chapter 4 presented the results of a conjoint survey experiment in which respondents were asked to choose between two hypothetical candidates for mayor—the incumbent and a challenger. The incumbent could vary along various performance conditions, including no performance information as well as good or bad performance in implementing public works projects or providing individual financial assistance to municipal residents. Surprisingly, respondents on average chose the challenger not only when they were informed the incumbent had performed poorly in office, but even when they were informed the incumbent performed *well*.

To explore the micro-foundations of these results, I use additional survey



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 5.3: Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents’ Reported Belief in the Likelihood Good Performance Will Be Repeated



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.

Figure 5.4: Conjoint Results Conditional on Respondents’ Reported Belief That Incumbents Learn to Be Corrupt In Office

questions to divide up the sample and re-analyze the conjoint experiment to see how the results vary depending on respondents' underlying political attitudes. I first assess whether beliefs about repeat performance are driving the bias against high-performing incumbents. I argue that if voters question whether good performance in one term predicts good performance in another, then they are unlikely to be swayed by incumbent good performance when they choose how to vote in re-elections. To test this argument, I use the survey question discussed above in which respondents were asked to rate the likelihood that an incumbent who performed well in her first term would repeat her good performance if re-elected. I divided the full sample of respondents into two groups, those who said good performance was likely to be repeated and those who said it was unlikely. I then re-ran the conjoint analysis separately for each of the two groups.

Figure 5.3 shows the results. The estimates on the left-hand side are those from the group of respondents who reported good performance is *un*-likely to be repeated, while the right-hand side depicts estimates from those who said repeated good performance is likely. Focusing, as before, on the incumbency conditions, good performance 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 exhibit some anti-incumbent bias, it is those who doubt good performance will be repeated that are driving the results in which strong performers are punished.

I also directly test whether beliefs about learning to be corrupt in office influence respondents' support for challengers versus incumbents. I argue that such learning implies that re-elected incumbents will be more likely to be corrupt than

challengers, who by default will be in their first term. If voters believe that incumbents do indeed learn to be better at successfully engaging in malfeasance, then voters would be better off by electing challengers, even if the incumbent performed well.

To test this argument, I divide the survey sample by respondents' reported belief that incumbents learn to be corrupt in office, and re-run the conjoint experiment analysis. As reported earlier in this chapter, the 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. As Figure 5.4 shows, it is those who believe incumbents learn how to be corrupt in office (right panel) that are the ones who punish even good performing incumbents. As was the case with beliefs about repeated good performance, those who did not report their belief in incumbent learning are indifferent between incumbents and challengers.

5.2.3 Support for Re-election

For many political scientists, the idea that voters want to use their vote to reward strong performing politicians is taken as a given. But it is not clear that all voters perceive the option of re-election in the same vein. Chapter 3 outlined in detail the prevalence of Peruvian voters' rejection of the right to run for re-election. Public opinion polling shows the depth of support for Congress' 2015 law banning re-election, with consistent approval of 66-67% in the month after the ban was passed and for two years afterward.⁸ The original survey conducted for this project also asked respondents to rate the extent to which they agreed with mayors having the chance to run for re-election, and more than two-thirds (68.71%) responded 'disagree'

⁸ Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, April 2015, November 2016, and June 2017.

or ‘strongly disagree’.

This blanket rejection of re-election has profound implications for electoral accountability, as it is the expectation of possibly being rewarded with a subsequent term that is theorized to incentivize mayoral performance. This section focuses on exploring the rationale behind voters’ disapproval of re-election. I provide evidence from, first, qualitative interviews, and second, a survey I conducted, in support of my argument that voters reject re-election because of a generalized disdain for politicians, belief that malfeasance increases over terms, and doubt about oversight institutions’ ability to provide a check on mayors’ behavior in a second term.

Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative interviews, conducted in two municipalities in each of three different regions and described extensively in Chapter 1, uncovered both the extent of support for banning re-election and probed the rationales for that belief. In each interview, I asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the new law, and why. Recall that interviewees were individuals who already played some direct role in politics or community affairs, from mayors and municipal staff to leaders and members of civil society organizations. Interestingly, across the broad swathe of interviewees who disagreed with re-election, they all tended to give either one or both of two reasons for why.

The first was because of the weakness of the accountability system over all. Interviewees described impunity in mayoral affairs. Corruption and poor performance were seen as rampant, and interviewees perceived little recourse for citizens to turn to in order to improve the situation. Many specifically reported that while a mayor may perform well in their first term, there was little guarantee they would perform equally well in the second. In other words, they expressed the same sentiment as

survey respondents that the likelihood of good performance being repeated was low.

The notion of the negative effect of political learning in office was also prominent as part of respondents' explanation for why government oversight of politicians' behavior in office was insufficient. As described above, interviewees commonly described their belief that politicians learn how to be corrupt in office, as part of their rationale for why second-term performance was unlikely to be good. Many also specifically linked this view with their support for banning re-election, as they were worried about incumbents being able to act on their new skills and better engage in malfeasance if re-elected.

The second reason interviewees gave for why they disagreed with re-election was the ongoing prevalence of candidates giving gifts to curry favor among voters. I asked all interviewees to describe the process of campaigning in their municipality, and overwhelmingly respondents voluntarily described how candidates giving out small gifts was an entrenched part of the process of cultivating electoral support. This involved everything from offering lunch and refreshments at rallies to giving gifts like hats, t-shirts and bags of rice. Respondents were also articulate about the link between this gift giving and electoral accountability: because voters were likely to choose the candidate who had given the most gifts, poorly performing incumbents could, through gift giving, win re-election despite dismal results from their time in office. Preventing all mayors from running again was therefore the logical solution.

Evidence from a range of sources suggests that campaign gift giving is in fact a common practice in Peruvian elections. In my survey, for example, I also found a high prevalence of gift giving in campaigns. Respondents were asked to rate the proportion of candidates in the last mayoral election that had given gifts at campaign events.⁹

⁹ This question and results were also discussed in Chapter 4 as part of the findings on the conjoint experiment. The question read, in Spanish: *Piense en las elecciones para el alcalde distrital de*

More than a quarter (26.9%) said all candidates gave gifts, another quarter said the majority (27.9%), and only 5.8% reported that no candidates engaged in gift-giving. These results are also largely in line with research, such as that of Paula Muñoz (2019), documenting the pervasiveness of gift giving at campaign rallies. It should be noted, though, that Muñoz argues the effect of gift giving runs through turnout at rallies, making it conceptually distinct from vote buying. Voters do not choose gift-giving candidates because of the gifts themselves; instead, offering gifts drives up turnout at campaign events, which in turn, in a low-information environment, provides an important signal to voters about the worthiness of the candidate. Still, gift giving was also enough of a worry that in December 2015, Peru's Congress passed a series of eight new regulations modifying the Political Parties Law, one of which specifically prohibits candidates from providing gifts to voters above S/.20 (about \$6 USD) once the official electoral campaign season had begun. How, if at all, these gifts actually sway voters is, of course, still an open empirical question. But the point remains that gift giving appears to be quite common, and the practice has caused some Peruvian voters to question the system of re-election as a whole.

Finally, a smaller group of interviewees rejected re-election of mayors simply because of a preference for challengers. These respondents exhibited a general attitude of wanting to see what a new mayor may do and wanting to give challengers a chance, no matter how the incumbent performed.

Survey Data

The survey I fielded provides an additional, and complementary, source of evidence for why voters reject re-election. Because support for banning re-election

Octubre del 2014. ¿Cuántos candidatos a la alcaldía distrital ofrecieron regalos como parte de su campaña, por ejemplo, en sus mítines o en sus reuniones?

was so prevalent, and interviewees tended to give similar rationales for their beliefs, I wanted to test the extent to which these reasons held across a wider swathe of the population, particularly among individuals less involved in politics. Survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with politicians having the right to seek another term in office, then were immediately asked the follow-up question of why they either agreed or disagreed. In both cases, respondents could answer freely, providing as many rationales as they wished, and the enumerators classified their answers into fixed categories.¹⁰

Respondents who reported agreeing with re-election were asked, "Why do you think mayors should have the right to seek re-election? You can give more than one reason if you have one."¹¹ Table 5.3 depicts the range of answers of the 309 respondents (29.12% of the sample) who reported agreeing with re-election.

The answer that is most clearly linked with electoral accountability, "they will do a better job in their first term in office because they want to be re-elected," was only provided by 11.7% of respondents. The most prevalent answer given, mentioned by 63.75% of respondents, was "if someone does a good job in office, they deserve another chance". This also reflects the logic of electoral accountability in wanting to reward good performers and maintain their continuity in office. Thus among respondents who agree with the option of re-election, the assumed attitudes underpinning electoral accountability seem to hold.

What about the larger proportion of respondents (68.71%) who reject incumbent re-election? What rationales do they give? Table 5.4 summarizes the percent-

¹⁰ Or marked 'other', 'don't know' or 'no response'.

¹¹ In Spanish: *¿Por qué piensa usted que los alcaldes SÍ deberían tener el derecho de postular a la re-elección? Puede dar más de una sola razón si la tuviera.*

Table 5.3: Why Do You Agree with Mayoral Re-election?

If someone does a good job, they deserve another chance	63.8%
They will do a better job in the first term if they can seek re-election	11.7%
Four years is too short to accomplish anything	8.4%
Other	2.9%

Note: Rounding to tenth of a percent. 11% of sample answered ‘Don’t Know’ and 4.9% answered ‘No response’; in each of these cases, respondents could not select another response. Otherwise, respondents could provide more than one answer, so percentages do not sum to 100.

ages of the sample of 814 people who reported disagreeing with re-election.¹² On the whole, the answers reflect a disdain of all politicians, a preference for newcomers and a questioning of the ability of the oversight system to keep re-elected mayors in line. It should be stressed that these categories were not provided to respondents who then chose between them; rather, respondents answered freely and enumerators characterized their answers.

Consider that almost half of respondents (46.3%) reported that they disagreed with re-election because of their belief that all mayors perform poorly. This very closely parallels the other survey evidence about the extent to which Peruvian voters have come to disdain politicians and to question their motivation for holding office. Furthermore, it links this disdain with the questioning of the benefits of a second term that ultimately leads to the electoral dis-connection. Belief that all politicians are poor performers and corrupt was in fact the most common rationale provided for the drive to ban re-election.

¹² Respondents who reported disagreeing with re-election were asked, “Why do you think mayors should NOT have the right to seek re-election? You can give more than one reason if you have one.” In Spanish: *¿Por qué piensa usted que los alcaldes NO deberían tener el derecho de postular a la re-elección? Puede dar más de una sola razón si la tuviera.*

Table 5.4: Why Do You Disagree with Mayoral Re-election?

All mayors are bad/corrupt/do a bad job in office, so why give them a second chance?	46.3%
I prefer to give an opportunity to someone new/ It's not good to repeat	29.6%
Even though they did a good job in the first term, there is no guarantee they will do a good job in the second	12%
Four years in office is long enough	7.2%
Even though they did a bad job in the first term, people will re-elect them because they give gifts or benefits	2.3%
No one here votes thinking of rewarding or punishing the mayor for his/her performance	0.5%
Other	3.6%

Note: Rounding to tenth of a percent. 5.5% of sample answered 'Don't Know' and 1.5% answered 'No response'; in each of these cases, respondents could not select another response. Otherwise, respondents could provide more than one answer, so percentages do not sum to 100.

The next most prevalent answer, mentioned by almost a third of respondents (29.6%), is the belief that someone new should always be given a chance. This ties in very closely with the incumbency disadvantage more broadly, and in particular with voters' views of challengers, especially of political outsiders, which was explored in an earlier section of this chapter.

Finally, 12% of respondents mentioned that they question the ability of the accountability system overall to hold mayors in line. While 12% may not seem that high, it is worth highlighting again that these are free answers, such that the questioning of the institutions of accountability may be implicitly assumed within respondents' answers of rejecting incumbents in favor of challengers. In the case of these respondents, though, they freely made the connection between their attitudes and perceived weakness in the accountability system.

The results from the qualitative interviews and the survey are similar and

different in some key ways. In terms of differences, almost all interviewees explicitly mentioned the weakness in oversight institutions, whereas it was noted by only 12% of survey respondents. Even more of a difference is that interviewees focused on the prevalence of vote buying as an impediment to electoral accountability, one that justified making re-election impossible. In the survey, however, only 2.3% of respondents answered that their rationale for disagreeing with re-election was vote buying. The populations are different in that the interviews were conducted with key informants with some involvement in political affairs, whereas the survey was drawn from random households who may or may not participate in politics. This difference may account for the divergence in responses across the two groups.

That said, interviewees and survey respondents concurred in important ways on their rationale for rejecting the legal option of re-election. Both groups expressed a clear dissatisfaction with politicians and their belief that most, if not all, politicians will perform poorly if given a chance. Both groups also expressed their absolute preference for challengers as a rationale for not wanting incumbents to be able to run for a second term, including their desire for political renewal through always having a newcomer in office.

5.3 Conclusion

Political science research tends to assume that voters hold certain beliefs related to incumbency and re-election. Armed with accurate information about how the incumbent performed, voters, it is presumed, should be willing to at least entertain the notion of re-electing good performers, even if in the end, non-performance factors outweigh the desire to reward. Voters should also believe that good performance in the current period usefully predicts good performance in the second period, if re-elected.

On the whole, experience in office should be viewed positively, as politicians learn how to better perform their jobs, gaining skills and contacts to facilitate improved outcomes for citizens. Yet, whether because these perceptions are rarely examined explicitly, or have only been studied in certain institutional contexts, scholars have so far largely failed to consider whether these attitudes hold everywhere, nor the implications for electoral accountability if they do not.

This chapter began by using survey data to demonstrate how these attitudes largely seem not to reflect the Peruvian electorate's views on mayoral politics. Rather than good performance in one term being used to infer good performance in a second, many respondents report being skeptical that good performance will be repeated if re-elected. Rather than political learning leading to improved performance, learning on-the-job by incumbents is often perceived as allowing them to understand how to circumvent the systems designed to detect malfeasance, leading to worse performance and higher corruption if re-elected.

Subsequent sections of the chapter then showed that these attitudes impact downstream voting behavior. I demonstrated how these voter perceptions underpin each of the three political phenomenon that characterize Peru's electoral disconnection. First, I use detailed data on candidates and electoral returns across two mayoral elections to show how voters not only prefer challengers on the whole, but particularly favor challengers with no experience in office, which I argue is consistent with a belief that politicians learn how to better evade government controls while on the job. Second, I return to the conjoint survey experiment described in Chapter 4, and show that the tendency to prefer challengers even over good performers is driven by respondents who report believing politicians learn how to be corrupt on the job and by those who are skeptical about the likelihood good performance in office will be repeated if an incumbent is re-elected. Finally, through qualitative interviews and

survey data, I show how these attitudes about incumbent learning and low likelihood of future good performance form the main rationales for respondents' disagreement with politicians having the right to run for re-election

The next chapter turns to the role of institutions of governmental oversight in my argument about the breakdown of the electoral connection. I continue to present evidence about how the voter attitudes explored in depth in this chapter have their roots in citizens' belief that accountability institutions are too weak to rein in politicians' poor behavior. I then demonstrate how weak oversight underpins the drive to ban re-election, and finally, how perceptions of greater strength in horizontal accountability institutions can mediate the disadvantage incumbent mayors face.

6 | The Key Role of Weak Oversight Institutions

Weak institutions of oversight are a concern around the world for policymakers and academics alike. Research from a number of contexts suggests strengthening governments' ability to sanction their politicians can lead to improvements in performance in terms of both complying with their policy obligations and reducing corruption (Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2003; Ferraz and Finan 2011; Fisman and Miguel 2007; Lagunes 2018, 2019; Olken 2007). While these impacts on performance are important in and of themselves, I argue that weak oversight has another significant, but so far understudied, effect: making electoral accountability, or the use of re-elections to hold politicians in line, difficult to achieve.

My overall argument in this project is that weak institutions of government oversight are at the heart of the story of how the electoral connection can break down in settings without political parties. The poor performance that weak oversight makes more likely encourages voters to begin questioning politicians' inherent goodness and motivation. Furthermore, while experience on the job is typically seen to be beneficial, weak oversight can lead to a view that incumbents learn during their term in office how to more effectively get away with both corruption and shirking more broadly, skills that they are particularly likely to make use of in a subsequent term, given the ineffectiveness of sanctions. Voters therefore come to doubt that in-

cumbents will perform well in office if re-elected, given they are seen as lacking both internal and external incentives to excel in subsequent terms. The result of these voter attitudes that weak institutional oversight generates is the electoral dis-connection I documented in previous chapters: a preference for challengers, even over incumbents who perform well, and a rejection of the premise of re-election itself.

In this chapter, I continue presenting the evidence in support of this argument. The previous chapter focused on the micro-foundations of the theory, demonstrating how the existence of a set of key voter attitudes translates into the kind of political behavior that indicates an electoral dis-connection. This chapter focuses more on the macro-level explanation of weak oversight institutions in influencing downstream voting behavior and political preferences.

The previous chapter presented evidence for how attitudes are influenced by voters' recognition of the weaknesses in Peru's system of institutional oversight. For example, about a quarter (23.5%) of the respondents who doubt that good performance will be repeated state that their reason was because they did not believe oversight institutions were strong enough to rein mayors in. Similarly, in qualitative interviews, the vast majority described their opposition to re-election as coming from their belief that the oversight system was weak, which in particular led to their view both that good performance was unlikely to be repeated and, rather than learning on the job being positive, it actually would lead to more corruption in a second term if the incumbent was re-elected.

This chapter focuses on how weak oversight impacts the outcomes and behaviors that reflect the electoral dis-connection, not on voter attitudes per se. To do so, I first zero in on the process of passing the ban on re-election to understand the rationale behind making it impossible for incumbents to seek a second term. Through a detailed analysis of the transcripts of Congressional debates, I show the main argu-

ments legislators used to justify the ban and the ways those arguments can be traced back to worries over deficiencies in Peru’s system of governmental oversight.

Then, I return to a methodology from previous chapters—the regression discontinuity design—to show that perceptions of strength in oversight institutions helps alleviate the incumbency disadvantage incumbents face. I also use the research method to reject some key alternative explanations. Overall, these findings suggest not only that weak oversight is the key explanation for the incumbency disadvantage, but that strengthening horizontal accountability institutions might provide a solution for overcoming the electoral dis-connection.

6.1 The Rationale for Banning Re-election

The fact that Peruvian lawmakers and voters alike so disdain re-election as to make it a legal impossibility is an important example of how the electoral connection has broken down. In the previous chapter, I offered evidence about why voters disagree with the right of incumbents to run for re-election. In this chapter, I study the law that was passed banning re-election outright, focusing on understanding the rationales for the law in order to make inferences about how the electoral connection—illustrated by the law itself—broke down. Drawing largely on transcripts of the Congressional debates during passage of the ban, I find that weak oversight is the key point of consensus among those who favor eliminating re-election. Because Peru’s horizontal accountability is weak, it is more difficult to reap the benefits of re-election in terms of incentivizing good performance. Without adequate controls on their behavior, the possibility of a second term devolves into a public management style of gift-giving and the provision of particularistic benefits over public services and policies to benefit society as a whole, making misuse of state funds for re-election

campaigns and overall corruption even more likely. Without sufficient sanctions for poor behavior in office, eliminating re-election was seen as the best possible course of action.

I first provide some background to the law, as a complement to that covered in previous chapters. The ban that was passed in March 2015 by Peru's Congress eliminated the possibility of immediate re-election for leaders of the country's regions, provinces and municipalities.¹ Prior to the law, local leaders could be re-elected indefinitely. The measure passed overwhelmingly, with 93 votes in favor, only 9 against and 10 abstentions (Aragón and Cruz 2018). Across Latin America, only Colombia has a similar law in place in which mayoral re-election is completely prohibited. All other Latin American countries allow either indefinite re-election or re-election with a two-term limit (Došek 2019), making the Peruvian law unusual in its extremity.

There have been other electoral reforms in Latin America that effected whether local leaders could be re-elected. Often, though, these reforms were aimed at altering the re-election rules for national-level office, either allowing or prohibiting Presidential or Congressional re-election; mayoral re-election was included largely because it was decided the new rules would apply to all levels of elected office, as was the case, for example, in Ecuador and Colombia (Došek 2019). Peru, however, is an opposite case, as the law only applied to the regional and local levels. And it was pushed for and passed by Congress, but by parties that have largely no representation in sub-national office, given the prevalence of local and regional parties at the local level (Došek 2019). This suggests that the aim of the law was to use a top-down measure to address political challenges occurring at the local level, and provides support for

¹ Ley 30305: Ley De Reforma De Los Artículos 191, 194 Y 203 De La Constitución Política Del Perú Sobre Denominación Y No Reección Inmediata De Autoridades De Los Gobiernos Regionales Y De Los Alcaldes.

using the motivation for passing the law as evidence for why the local-level breakdown in the electoral connection occurred.

Since this was a law that was debated in, and ultimately approved by, the Peruvian Congress, the transcript of the debate offers an interesting datasource to understand the rationale behind the unusual effort to prevent incumbents from having the right to run for a subsequent term. Of course, debate transcripts are limited in the sense that elite views may be far removed from the attitudes of the population, though public opinion surveys from the time suggested 67% of citizens supported the ban.² Some extent of the speech making may also be posturing. Still, the congressional transcripts provide useful insight into the reasoning behind banning re-election, especially given the extent of congruence in the views of those in favor.

I read each of the transcripts of the four debates held from June to October 2014.³ The bill included a few different provisions but I only focused on the aspect that eliminated immediate re-election for mayors and regional presidents. There is some mention in the debates of the need to establish legal comparability between all levels of executive office. Because the President of Peru can only be elected for one term, then must sit out one election before running again, some speakers asserted that leaders from all levels—national, regional and local—should be elected under the same electoral regime. However it is clear from the debates that this is more of an afterthought, rather than the main impetus for the law.

Instead, the results match what the popular and academic literature from Peru seemed to believe, that the corruption and mismanagement of Peru's local

² Datum Internacional S.A., *Pulso Perú*, Apri 2015.

³ The debates were held June 4, June 5, August 28 and October 23, 2014. A fifth debate, held May 3, 2015, is not available online, and repeated requests to receive it have gone unanswered. The debate transcripts and other related documentation are available at: http://www2.congreso.gob.pe/sicr/tradocestproc/Expvirt_2011.nsf/visbusqptramdoc/03886?opendocument.

elected officials had spurred Congress to act. However, the arguments offered in support of the ban also highlight proponents' view that it is the weakness in Peru's system of governmental oversight that make it impossible to read the positive benefits of re-election in the Peruvian context.

To start, it is clear from the transcripts that there is universal agreement that the re-election ban is linked with corruption. Every congressperson referenced that the law's aim was to curb malfeasance. Though the ban was first put forward in 2011, speakers continuously asserted that the reason the bill was finally being debated was the huge corruption scandals happening at the time involving regional presidents, with the implicated politicians mentioned by name. Again and again, re-election, it is asserted, leads to corruption. Describing why Peruvian citizens disagree with re-election, one Legislator stated simply, "all re-election is corruption".⁴ The few legislators who argued against the bill stated as their reason their disagreement with the assertion that eliminating re-election would reduce corruption.⁵

However, outside of corruption, which received the lions share of the media and popular attention about the ban, the debates reveal there is actually another major point of consensus, which is that weak institutional oversight is what is making re-election problematic in the Peruvian case. One Congressperson put it simply, "we should not allow re-election, either in regional or local government, in the current climate. We know that the corresponding institutions are not complying with their

⁴ In Spanish: "...toda reelección es corrupción". Hernán de la Torre Dueñas, June 4, 2014.

⁵ For example: "I don't think that no re-election is going to solve the real problem of corruption." In Spanish: "*Yo no creo que la no reelección vaya a salvar el problema real de corrupción.*" Rolando Reátegui Flores, June 4, 2014. In another example: "The main argument employed by the proponents of this law and by those who are defending it is corruption... But I do not see a direct relationship between corruption and re-election." In Spanish: "*...El principal argumento esgrimido por los proponentes de esta norma y por aquellos que la están defendiendo es la corrupción...Pero no veo relación directa entre corrupción y reelección.*" Verónica Mendoza Frisch, August 28, 2014.

oversight functions."⁶ Another asserted that for re-election to work well, the Supreme Auditing Agency needed to be prepared to do an audit of every elected official that ran for re-election.⁷ One speaker described the "strange dilemma" of local politicians with "significant resources... and significant autonomy, but completely lacking in mechanisms of oversight and auditing."⁸ Responding to a Congresswoman who was arguing against the ban by mentioning how countries like the United States which have re-election, a Congress person retorted, "in the United States, the oversight authorities function with much higher quality than in Peru...the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the Auditor General, the media in general function better in the United States than in Peru."⁹ More broadly, one noted that "the root of the problem is that adequate control mechanisms do not exist in the face of corruption."¹⁰

In particular, weak oversight is seen as a problem for re-election because it allows for a few pernicious behaviors to take place. One is that re-election combined with lack of adequate controls fuels an improper use of state funds for re-election campaigns. "Banning re-election will avoid the temptation, among elected officials,

⁶ In Spanish: "*No debemos permitir que haya reelección tanto en los gobiernos regionales como en los locales en la coyuntura actual. Sabemos que las instituciones correspondientes no están cumpliendo sus funciones de control.*" Aldo Bardález, June 5, 2014.

⁷ In Spanish "...*la Contraloría debe hacer una auditoría a todos los presidentes regionales y alcaldes que pretendan ser reelegidos...*" Juan Pari Choquecota, June 5, 2014.

⁸ In Spanish: "*Llegamos a una disyuntiva extraña hoy en día: tenemos autoridades regionales, autoridades locales, potencialidades como líderes locales o regionales, con importantes recursos, vana canon y regalías, con importantes autonomías, pero carentes en absoluto de mecanismos de control y de fiscalización.*" Vicente Zeballos Salinas, August 28, 2014.

⁹ In Spanish: "...*en Estados Unidos los órganos de control funcionan con mucha más calidad que en el Perú. El Ministerio Público, la Corte Suprema, la Contraloría, los medios de comunicación en general funcionan mejor en Estados Unidos que en el Perú.*" Omar Chehade Moya, June 4, 2014.

¹⁰ In Spanish: "*El problema de fondo es que no existen mecanismos de control adecuados frente a la corrupción*" Manuel Dammert, August 28, 2014.

to use public resources in order to get re-elected."¹¹ The use of the word ‘temptation’ suggests how politicians are drawn to poor behavior because they know they can get away with it. Another speaker used the same word: “the temptation of public resources is more than obvious; its not a possibility, its clear.”¹² The worry about politicians using state resources to get themselves re-elected was clearly seen as having its roots in the weakness of the country’s system of institutional oversight. One Congress person argued in favor of the ban “... (because) it is very difficult in Peru... to have adequate oversight over officials who seek re-election and who, unfortunately, use the apparatus of the state to do so.”¹³

There was a particular concern that re-election with weak oversight leads to inefficient and low quality spending of public funds, as incumbents make budgeting decisions based on increasing their likelihood of winning re-election, not on benefiting the population. Here the link between corruption and poor performance becomes clear, and that ‘malfeasance’ broadly defined includes both elements. One legislator argued that the ban “reflects the feelings of an important sector of the citizenry that sees how their elected officials often do not fulfill their functions in a comprehensive way, since they are more interested in how to obtain votes instead of dealing with the problems and needs of their people.”¹⁴ Another argued that since politicians begin

¹¹ Leonardo Inga Vásquez, June 5, 2014. In Spanish: “*La no reelección evitará la tentación, en las autoridades en funciones, de utilizar los recursos públicos para fines de ser reelegidos.*”

¹² Mauricio Mulder Bedoya, August 28, 2014. In Spanish: “*...la tentación de los recursos públicos es más que patente; no es una posibilidad, es clarísima.*”

¹³ Omar Chegade Moya, June 4, 2014. In Spanish: “*...es muy complicado en el Perú... hacer un control a determinadas autoridades que van a una reelección y que, lamentablemente, utilizan el aparato del Estado...*”

¹⁴ In Spanish: “*Considero que esta iniciativa refleja el sentir de un sector importante de la ciudadanía que ve cómo sus autoridades no cumplen, muchas veces, a cabalidad con sus funciones, debido a que están más interesados en cómo obtener votos en lugar de darles tratamiento a los problemas y necesidades de sus pueblos.*” Cristóbal Llatas Altamirano, August 28, 2014.

seeking an additional term “beginning the first day after winning the election,” that drive “distracts them from the true work of the regional presidents and mayors”.¹⁵

In this vein, many described the use of small, one-off public works projects to garner support in individual neighborhoods or villages. As one speaker explained: “Why do they (politicians) do small public works projects without impact? They don’t do it for the community’s interest, but for a political interest: they want to do small public works projects here and there, so that after they can say to vote for the politician in the next election.”¹⁶ With no opportunity to seek re-election, the logic goes, performance should improve because budget allocations will be made purely based on public welfare calculations, not on electoral interests.

This view that re-election leads to poor performance runs contrary to Mayhew’s (1974) argument about the incentivizing power of offering the possibility of subsequent terms, precisely because he assumed that politicians will perform well to win an additional term in office. Again, though, lack of institutional oversight seems to be skewing the link that Mayhew observed between re-election and good performance. Politicians considering how to allot their time and resources with an eye towards electoral payoffs will of course make calculations about the minimum effort and resources needed to get themselves re-elected. Without oversight, politicians are free to choose the easiest way possible to secure re-election: buying off support. If prevented from doing so by credible sanctions, they would be more likely to take the hard route, supplying voters with difficult-to-implement policies in health, education

¹⁵ In Spanish: “...casi los que se quieren reelegir desde que inician el primer día de haber ganado la elección están buscando hacer las estrategias para reelegirse buscando los fondos, tomándose la mejor foto o posesionándose mediáticamente; por eso es que distrae el verdadero trabajo de los presidentes regionales y de los alcaldes.” José León Rivera, October 23, 2014.

¹⁶ In Spanish: “¿Por qué se hacen pequeñas obras sin impacto? No lo hacen por interés de la comunidad sino por un interés político: quieren hacer obras pequeñas aquí y allá, para después decir que voten por la misma autoridad en la próxima elección.” Johnny Cárdenas Cerrón, August 28, 2014.

and so on, policies that would bring a longer-term benefit to constituents while also increasing their chances of being re-elected.

Another worry related to public spending being skewed by re-election concerns the prevalence of vote buying or gift giving in campaigns. This is the same worry respondents from qualitative interviews reported, as discussed in the results presented in the last chapter, as a rationale against re-election. Speaking of an emblematic case of corruption and poor performance, one Congressperson noted "... and that mayor is working on his re-election project. And I'm sure he will get re-elected because he goes around giving sweet potatoes to all the shantytowns."¹⁷ Another described politicians who "filled stadiums to give out household appliances, along with food. Who could compete with those candidates?"¹⁸ Using resources in this way was seen as putting incumbents on unfair footing, making it difficult to ensure poorly performing incumbents do not have an unfair advantage, and making electoral sanctioning more challenging. These worries about incumbent behavior seem to match evidence about these practices from other sources. As described in previous chapters, there is ample evidence that gift giving by candidates is common throughout Peru.

The link between politicians with their generally bad qualities, and the fact that no one would oversee them, also led to many discussions of the enduring view that 'power corrupts'. As one speaker said succinctly: "I have always suggested that re-election ends up transforming us. Once we have power, we want to stay in it and the cases of corruption arrive."¹⁹

¹⁷ Mesías Guevara Amasifuén, June 5, 2014. In Spanish: "*Y ese alcalde también está trabajando en un proyecto de reelección. Y seguro que sale reelecto porque anda regalando camotes en todos los pueblos jóvenes...*"

¹⁸ In Spanish: "... llenaban estadios para regalar artículos eléctricos a todo el mundo, aparte de comida. ¿Quién podría competir con esos candidatos?" Enrique Wong Pujada, June 5, 2014.

¹⁹ In Spanish: "*Yo siempre he planteado que la reelección termina transformándonos. Una vez que tenemos poder, queremos mantenernos en él y vienen los casos de corrupción...*" Yehude Simon,

In addition to the link with weak oversight, a final key theme that emerged was the extreme levels of disdain for politicians, which as I argue in Chapter 2, is an important key attitude linked with an electoral connection breakdown. Through their comments on the floor, Congress people expressed the same levels of disdain for local politicians seen in the general population, as Chapter 5 showed. Mayors were described as lacking capacity and a vocation to help their community. With derision, a legislator described how mayors spend their time building “coliseums and sports fields and stadiums, when their citizens don’t have water, electricity, or health and sanitation services.”²⁰ Mayors only sought re-election to continue robbing state coffers and to stay in power for life, “becoming feudal lords”.²¹ They are described as not having the honesty necessary to hold office.²²

Again paralleling the qualitative interviews with voters, strong performing mayors were the exception to the rule. Furthermore, blocking good mayors from running for re-election was seen as a necessary evil in order to also prevent the majority bad mayors from running. For example, one legislator noted, “the population knows how, in one way or another, to pick good mayors; but for this small percentage of good mayors, we cannot keep harming the country.”²³

Overall, the debates during Congress’ ratification of the ban on re-election

August 28, 2014.

²⁰ In Spanish: “*Lamentablemente, hay alcaldes y presidentes regionales que están pensando en hacer coliseos y canchas y estadios, cuando sus pueblos no tienen ni agua, ni luz, ni servicios de saneamiento ni de salud.*” Jaime Delgado Zegarra, June 5, 2014.

²¹ In Spanish: “*Eso es lo que estamos viendo hoy día: alcaldes que ya tienen cuatro periodos y continúan ahí, y que se convierten en unos señores feudales.*” Carlos Tubino Arias-Schreiber, June 4, 2014.

²² In Spanish: “*...hay muchos alcaldes que, lamentablemente, no tienen la honestidad correspondiente...*” Casio Huairu Chuquichaico, October 23, 2014.

²³ In Spanish: “*...la población sabe, de una u otra manera, seleccionar a los buenos alcaldes; pero por ese pequeño porcentaje de buenos alcaldes, no podemos seguir perjudicando al país.*” Manuel Merino, June 4, 2014.

provide important evidence for the role of weak oversight in generating the electoral dis-connection. It is clear from the discussion of the rationale for the law that, while fighting corruption was an important consideration, so was weak oversight and ineffective sanctions. Re-election was deemed to be bound to fail in the Peruvian case, not only because mayors were corrupt, but perhaps more fundamentally, because the systems designed to keep their behavior in check were not robust enough to do so. Without strong horizontal accountability, a second-best solution of banning re-election was needed.

6.2 Testing the Link Between Oversight Institutions and the Incumbency Disadvantage

The main argument put forth in this project is that, in the absence of parties, weak horizontal accountability can set in motion an electoral dis-connection. As a corollary, an improvement in oversight should also be able to mediate that dis-connection. Klačnja (2016) 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. In this way, the increase in corruption is compensated for by better performance in other areas. I contend there may be a different solution to the incumbency disadvantage generated by increasing malfeasance over time: strengthening horizontal accountability. With the possibility of poor performance increasing across terms, voters need some assurance of a check on politicians' power in order to believe that an incumbent will perform well if re-elected, and thus to vote for the incumbent. This assurance, I argue, can come through trust in the effectiveness of horizontal accountability institutions.

In this section, I evaluate this final testable implication of my theory: strengthening oversight institutions has a direct impact on voters' willingness to re-elect incumbents. As I show in Column I of Table 2.2 in Chapter 2, my theory would predict that oversight institutions would have a positive and direct impact on vote choice. In contrast, in the two alternative accounts of voting behavior, we would not expect accountability institutions to have any direct effect on how individuals allot their vote in re-elections.

One way to study the impact of oversight is through direct measures of institutional strength, such as the number of successful prosecutions or actual reductions in corruption. The challenge with such measures, however, is that they 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 evidence that politicians are actually 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 behavior. In other words, rather than including a measure of institutional strength and assuming that it proxies for voters both knowing about and believing the institution is strong, I include a direct measure of voters' assessment of institutional strength itself.

In Chapter 3, I used a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to test whether mayoral incumbents faced an advantage or disadvantage at the ballot box due to their incumbency. The procedure compares barely-winning candidates (the current incumbents) with the candidates they barely beat (the previous challengers). Because the vote share margin is so small, making the outcome largely random, the two types of candidates are essentially the same except that one group held office and the other

did not. Comparing the electoral results in the subsequent election between the two groups allows for separating out the impact of incumbency on future electoral prospects. Employing this strategy, I find that the bare losers in the previous election were much more likely to win the next election than the bare winners (the current incumbents), suggesting the existence of an incumbency disadvantage.

Here, I return to an empirical strategy based on the RDD that I made use of in Chapter 4, where I presented evidence that voters are biased against incumbents even when they perform well. I again use the dataset of bare losers and bare winners, and employ a heterogeneous treatment effects design to understand what factors might either aggravate or mediate the incumbency disadvantage. In other words, I study whether the impact of incumbency on future electoral success depends on characteristics of the incumbent or of the municipality in which she runs. The question I am able to answer is, despite being on average electorally disadvantaged compared to challengers, are there particular characteristics of the incumbent that allow her to overcome the disadvantage, or conversely, that make her even more disadvantaged? By identifying those factors, we can make inferences about what leads to that disadvantage in the first place, as well as how to correct it.

In Chapter 4, I showed how performance had no impact on the incumbency disadvantage, with both good and bad performing incumbents alike facing an electoral penalty because of their incumbency. Now I use the same strategy to test my argument that trust in the strength of oversight institutions can ameliorate the incumbency disadvantage. As in Chapter 4, I perform the following local linear regression, including the triple interaction between the treatment variable (incumbent), forcing variable (vote share margin in the previous election) and the relevant covariate I hypothesize may impact the incumbency disadvantage (X), as well as all lower order interactions:

$$y_d = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{incumbent}_d + \beta_2 \text{forcing}_d + \beta_3 X + \beta_4 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot \text{forcing}_d + \beta_5 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot X \\ + \beta_6 \text{forcing}_d \cdot X + \beta_7 \text{incumbent}_d \cdot \text{forcing}_d \cdot X + \epsilon_d$$

The coefficient I am interested in for this test is β_5 , the coefficient for the interaction term between incumbency and the particular variable I posit may impact the incumbency disadvantage. If the coefficient is significant, it would suggest heterogeneity in the incumbency effect in terms of that variable. In my test here, for example, if the coefficient on the interaction term ‘Incumbent X Trust in Horizontal Accountability Institutions’ was significant and positive, it would suggest that while incumbents are disadvantaged on average, those who run in municipalities where citizens have greater trust in oversight institutions gain an electoral boost relative to those who run in municipalities with lower trust. As before, all of the interacted covariates have been standardized (mean of zero and standard deviation of 1) to facilitate comparison.

As I argue above, I am interested in directly testing how voters’ views on the efficacy of oversight institutions impact their voting behavior. To do so, I make use of a yearly annual household survey, the ENAHO survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Hogares*) described and used in earlier chapters, and carried out by Peru’s National Institute for Statistics and Information (INEI - *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informatica*).²⁴ A random sample of municipalities is drawn each year, then households are randomly sampled from within them. Across the three elections years of my study, I have observations from 1183 municipalities, or 72% of the total number

²⁴ The underlying survey data is available online for every year beginning in 2004: http://inei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/Consulta_por_Encuesta.asp.

of districts.

For my measure of institutional trust, I draw on a battery of questions about trust in various government agencies, social institutions and actors. Respondents are asked ‘Currently, do you trust institutions such as ...’, then each institution or actor is listed, with five possible answer options: none; a little; sufficient; a lot; I don’t know.²⁵ The latter answer I coded as missing. The questions are asked identically across years. Most actors and institutions are included every year, though there is some variation across time, as I discuss further below.

As my interest is in how political attitudes influence voting behavior, I use only survey responses from the year of the local elections (2006, 2010 and 2014), and for the months prior to when the election is held. The survey is fielded monthly, so I only include data from January-October for 2006 and January-September for 2010 and 2014 (the mayoral election was held in November in 2006 and in October in 2010 and 2014). I use only the period right before the election because I hypothesize that this time frame would be the most likely to influence voter behavior; earlier distrust may already be resolved or have been forgotten by the time the election is held.

I create a municipal-level measure of trust in oversight institutions for each election year by averaging individual responses to the trust question for all of the horizontal accountability institutions that are included in the ENAHO survey. Importantly, the survey includes all of the key national-level oversight institutions. In 2006, 2010 and 2014, the ENAHO survey asks about trust in the National Elections Board, judicial branch, Ombudsmen, and Municipal Government.²⁶ In 2014, the survey also asks about four government agencies designed to fight corruption, so

²⁵ In Spanish: *Actualmente, tiene usted confianza en instituciones tales como...* The answer options in Spanish are: *Nada; Poco; Suficiente; Bastante; No Sabe*.

²⁶ In Spanish, the survey lists the institutions as: *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones; Poder Judicial (Juzgados, Juez de Paz, etc.); Defensoría del Pueblo; Municipalidad Distrital*.

I include an average of these responses as well into the 2014 measures. 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.²⁷

Column 1 of Table 6.1 presents the the results, which provide strong support for my argument that when voters have greater trust in horizontal accountability institutions, they are more likely to vote for incumbents. Because the trust measures are coded from lower to higher trust, a positive coefficient can be interpreted as higher 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 incumbents who run in districts in which respondents reported higher levels of trust in horizontal accountability institutions receive an electoral boost relative to challengers. Returning again to the testable implications of my theory, in my account of the electoral dis-connection, we would expect for oversight institutions to have a direct impact on individuals' voting behavior. This is exactly what we see. Voters who live in municipalities where on average people have a higher trust in oversight institutions are also more likely to vote to re-elect incumbents than those who live in places with lower trust.

To provide greater confidence in my findings, I carry out a series of checks on the validity of the trust measure and the final results. One possible counter-argument is that the 'trust in accountability institutions' variable is actually picking up variation in respondents' levels of trust overall. Voters who are simply more

²⁷ In Spanish, the four institutions are: *Procuraduría Anticorrupción*; *Fiscalía*; *Controlaría*; *Comisión de Alto Nivel Anticorrupción*. The *Comisión de Alto Nivel Anticorrupción* (High-level Anti-Corruption Commission) is not a government agency per se, but a network of government and civil society actors set-up to coordinate anti-corruption activities and evaluate and put forth policy responses.

Table 6.1: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Voter Trust in Institutions

	DV: Candidate Won Election		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incumbent	-0.276*** (0.029)	-0.283*** (0.028)	-0.283*** (0.028)
Vote Share Margin Previous	3.129*** (0.305)	3.126*** (0.297)	3.125*** (0.297)
Incumbent X Vote Share Margin Previous	-2.211*** (0.410)	-2.057*** (0.399)	-2.062*** (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*** (0.020)	0.393*** (0.019)	0.393*** (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.

trusting of government in general may be more likely to re-elect, rather than the effect operating specifically through trust in oversight institutions. I can evaluate whether this argument holds by testing the effect on the incumbency disadvantage of trust in other types of actors and institutions.

To do so, I test two measures of trust in different institutions and government actors that are unrelated to accountability. The first is trust in other politicians and levels of government that are not involved in overseeing mayors' performance. I again create a district average of reported trust in all of the non-accountability related political actors and institutions included in the ENAHO survey, which are the regional government, provincial government, Congress and political parties.²⁸ The second measure is trust in the army and the police, both of which are institutions that should have no direct accountability relationship with local mayors.²⁹ In both measures, all of the institutions and actors were included in the 2006, 2010 and 2014 surveys, and again, the questions were asked identically across years.

If it were generalized trust in political institutions and actors that was doing the work to influence voting behavior, then we would expect to see that these other trust measures were also significant within the RDD heterogeneous treatment effects design. However, as Columns 2 and 3 of Table 6.1 show, neither of these measures is significant. Furthermore, the sample size is likely sufficient at around 4000 observations in each model, thus suggesting the insignificance is a product of being under-powered, and the coefficients are also quite small. Overall, this suggests that it is not the case that places with greater trust overall are more likely to re-elect; rather, it seems to be only trust in the specific institutions of oversight that matters

²⁸ In Spanish: *El gobierno regional; la municipalidad provincial; El Congreso de la República; los partidos políticos.*

²⁹ In Spanish: *Las fuerzas armadas; La policía nacional del Perú.*

for incumbent re-election.

A second potential concern might be that higher trust in horizontal accountability institutions is merely a proxy for perceptions of better mayoral performance, as people may trust oversight institutions more when the mayor does a better job in office. If this were the case, we would expect to see a strong, positive and significant correlation between our trust in accountability institutions measure for each municipality and the measures of performance of the mayor in that municipality. I return to the four performance measures used in Chapter 5 and estimate a Pearson correlation coefficient to assess the extent of a linear correlation between trust in oversight institutions and performance. While three of the four measures do have a significant correlation, that correlation is so small that it suggests no substantive link between the two measures. The correlations for each of the performance measures are, respectively: average spending of public works budget (.078); conditional cash transfer program (CCT) added to district (.018); change in Human Development Index (HDI) (.09); and rating of municipal performance from the ENAHO household survey in 2014 (.12).³⁰

As an additional test, recall that in the ENAHO household survey in 2014, 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 Chapter 5, this variable is insignificant, while trust in oversight institutions is significant and positive. This suggests both that trust in oversight institutions is distinct from voters' assessment of mayoral performance, and that what impacts incumbents'

³⁰ The correlation between the trust measure and CCT performance is not significant. The p-value for the correlation with public works spending is 0.002. For the other two measures, p-value <.001.

electoral success is not performance, but voters' trust in oversight institutions to constrain their behavior if elected to a subsequent term.

6.3 Rejecting Alternative Explanations

The research design I employed in the previous section is also useful for assessing how alternative explanations fare in comparison to my own argument that weak oversight best explains the breakdown in the electoral connection. Using other variables as I do with trust in oversight institutions, I can test various hypotheses about how the incumbency disadvantage may be mediated. In this section, I first review tests I conducted in earlier chapters of the role of performance, then focus on evaluating how access to information, political competition and the political climate may influence the incumbency disadvantage. Overall, the results of these various tests provide support for my contention that weak horizontal accountability is the best explanation for Peru's electoral dis-connection.

6.3.1 Performance and Information

The alternative explanation of performance is perhaps the most important that needs to be tested, for if incumbents who perform well are able to overcome their incumbency disadvantage, then the electoral connection actually still holds and, more broadly, electoral accountability can still function to incentive good behavior in office. In the recent literature on incumbency disadvantage in developing countries described earlier, the difficulty incumbents faced in getting re-elected was largely reduced to the tendency of those incumbents to perform poorly (Klašnja 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik 2017; Uppal 2009). The incumbency disadvantage then actually reflected the success of electoral accountability, rather than its absence.

The conjoint survey experiment presented in Chapter 4 provides a good test of the alternative explanation of performance driving a breakdown in the electoral connection. If, in the conjoint experiment, respondents only favored challengers when the incumbent performed poorly, this would suggest that poor performance was driving both the incumbency disadvantage, and by extension, voters' rejection of re-election more broadly. However, respondents preferred challengers even over incumbents who performed well.

In Chapter 4, I also used the regression discontinuity design employed in the previous section to show how good performance did *not* help incumbents to overcome their electoral disadvantage. I tested four different performance measures: whether a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program was added to the district during the mayor's term; the percent of the public works budget spent; change in the human development indicator (HDI); and for 2014 only, survey data on satisfaction with municipal governance. The results suggested that even incumbents who performed well in these four metrics enjoyed no electoral benefit for their efforts. In other words, challengers were preferred over both good and bad performers alike.

The role of access to performance information is also important to evaluate, as it is the key explanation for weak electoral accountability put forth in the literature. For a range of reasons, information is seen to be at the heart of failures in electoral sanctioning. Voters may simply lack access to accurate information about how the incumbent is performing (Banerjee et al. 2011; Bobonis, Cámara Fuertes, and Schwabe 2016; Chong et al. 2015; Dunning et al. 2019; Ferraz and Finan 2008; Gottlieb 2016; De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2012; Larreguy, Marshall, and Snyder Jr 2019). They may have accurate information, but fail to attribute blame correctly (Gélineau and Remmer 2006; Martin and Raffler Forthcoming; Sances 2017). Or that information may not challenge their prior beliefs sufficiently enough to result in rewarding or

punishing at the ballot box (Arias et al. 2019; Bhandari, Larreguy, and Marshall 2019; Chong et al. 2015).

As with the alternative hypothesis of performance, the conjoint survey experiment also allows for testing the alternative explanation of information. By randomly varying the information respondents received, including receiving no information and being informed about both good and bad performance, I can test how that information impacts vote choice. However, respondents' preferences for candidates actually did not vary across information conditions. Whether respondents were given no information about the incumbent, or were told the incumbent had good or bad performance, respondents still on average preferred the challenger. This suggests that performance information cannot explain the kinds of voter behavior that underpin Peru's electoral dis-connection.

I also use the regression discontinuity design as an additional test of the hypothesis that voters would re-elect incumbents if they had access to accurate performance information. I use a few measures to gauge voters' access to and use of political information. Using district-level data from the 2007 census, I create an average across three measures of households' owning information-related technology (cell phones, television and internet). I also include two ENAHO survey questions, again making district-level averages for the months preceding the elections in 2006, 2010 and 2014. The first question asks how often respondents inform themselves about politics.³¹ The second gauges how much interest they have in politics, with the logic being that individuals with a greater interest are more likely to both inform

³¹ The question asks: How often do you inform yourself about current politics in the country? In Spanish: *¿Con qué frecuencia usted se informa sobre la actualidad política en el país?* Answer options: Frequently; Sometimes; Only when you are interested in an issue; Never; Don't know. In Spanish: *Frecuentemente; De vez en cuando; Sólo cuando le interesa algún tema; Nunca; No sabe.*

themselves and use the information they have at their disposal.³²

In each case, higher values of the variables indicate greater levels of information or political interest, and all have been standardized to facilitate comparison. If incumbents fared better or worse in districts with greater information, then we would expect to see the interaction term between incumbency and each information variable to be significant in the heterogeneous treatment design framework of the RDD. However, as Table 6.2 shows, none of the variables associated with greater access to information is significant. Furthermore, the coefficients on each of the three variables are quite small, and the high sample size means being underpowered is likely not a concern. Overall, these findings suggest that an information constraint—not knowing how the incumbent performed—does not sufficiently explain why voters systematically prefer challengers.

6.3.2 Competition and the Political Climate

In addition to incumbent performance and access to information, I test for and ultimately reject a series of other alternative explanations for how incumbents overcome voter bias to improve their electoral prospects. This set of explanations is linked with aspects of political competition and of the Peruvian political system and legal framework governing elections.

Simple intuition would suggest that more competitive elections may simply be harder for incumbents to win, and therefore the incumbency disadvantage may be better explained by the extent of political competition faced by individual incum-

³² The question reads ‘Does politics...’ and then offers four options: Interest you and you are a member or sympathizer of a political party or political organization; Interest you and you are an independent; Not interest you or you do not care; Don’t know. In Spanish: *¿A usted la política... Le interesa y es simpatizante ó miembro de un Partido u organización política; Le interesa y es independiente; Le es indiferente/no le importa; No Sabe.*

Table 6.2: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Impact of Political Information

	DV: Candidate Won Election		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incumbent	−0.247*** (0.019)	−0.266*** (0.029)	−0.265*** (0.029)
Vote Share Margin Previous	2.907*** (0.196)	2.865*** (0.309)	2.873*** (0.308)
Incumbent X Vote Share Margin Previous	−2.262*** (0.264)	−1.780*** (0.420)	−1.810*** (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*** (0.013)	0.378*** (0.020)	0.379*** (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.

bents. In political science research, one common way of quantifying levels of political competition is the effective number of parties (ENP) measure. The ENP measure is a way to gauge not only the absolute number of parties, but to weigh them according to strength. If five parties run, but one earns 80% of the vote while the other 20% is divided among the remaining four parties, the ENP measure would be lower than if each of the five parties won around 20% of the vote. As has been discussed extensively, Peru is a weak party system, so the ENP should not be confused with a measure of party strength. Rather, in this particular context, it is closer to measuring the distribution of votes among candidates, reflecting whether the race was less competitive in the sense of being dominated by one candidate, or was more competitive, with votes more evenly distributed among a set of top candidates. As a first test of whether incumbents are more disadvantaged in more competitive districts, I include the effective number of parties (ENP) measure both from the previous election (time $t-1$) and also from the current election (time t).

Another measure related to competition and fragmentation is the number of candidates who run. The breakdown in Peru's party system, combined with the fact that there is no run-off in mayoral races, means a high number of candidates may seek office in any given election. Across the three elections included in this study, the mean number of candidates per district was between six and seven, and 13.7% of municipalities on average across the three years had 10 or more candidates. To test this aspect of fragmentation, I include the number of candidates in both the previous election and the current election.

A final way to think about political competition is how geographically spread out a candidate's support is among the population. This is particularly the case in countries that share Peru's structure of decentralization and have high numbers of districts with disperse populations. Municipalities in Peru may actually cover a

large landmass and be composed of many distinct villages, some of which may be hours away from the seat of government in the main town. Across all of Peru’s municipalities, the median number of villages was 32 in 2007.³³ Given that elections are won with a plurality and no run-off, candidates need not earn support from across the municipality to win. Candidates may therefore either opt to concentrate their campaigning such that they win large numbers of voters in a few villages, or aim for more uniform levels of support across the municipality as a whole. For incumbents with control over the budget and the ability to strategically place public services or public works construction in key villages to curry support, a more geographically concentrated vote share may allow them to overcome the incumbency disadvantage.

To test this contention, I use precinct-level voting results and calculate the variance of the precinct vote share across all precincts in the district for each candidate.³⁴ A lower variance would indicate the candidate had received consistent levels of voter support across villages, whereas a higher variance would show that the candidate’s support was geographically concentrated. I include the variance measure in the analysis for each individual candidate, but I can only do so from time $t-1$ because candidate-level data is missing for those who choose not to run in time t .³⁵

Finally, 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, particularly in the election years included in this study, though a 2015 law requiring that recalls be held much later in a

³³ In Spanish, these are called *centros poblados*. The data come from the 2007 Peruvian census.

³⁴ A special thank you to José Incio who provided me with the effective number of parties measure and the precinct-level elections returns.

³⁵ Since the RDD analysis is unconditional on running, all candidates from time $t-1$ are included, even if they do not run in time t .

mayor's term and allowing for the removed mayor to pick her successor has dampened their use significantly (Holland and Incio 2018). To assess 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.³⁶

I use all of these measures within the RDD framework to test whether they impact the incumbency disadvantage faced by mayors. As Table 6.3 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. Variations in levels of political competition and fragmentation, and in the use of the recall, thus are poor explanations for the incumbency disadvantage, and by extension, neither are they adequate alternative accounts for the existence of the electoral dis-connection as a whole.

³⁶ The data was again generously provided by José Incio.

Table 6.3: RDD and Incumbent Re-election: Political Competition, Fragmentation and Recalls

	DV: Candidate Won Election							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Incumbent	-0.247*** (0.019)	-0.246*** (0.019)	-0.247*** (0.019)	-0.247*** (0.019)	-0.293*** (0.024)	-0.247*** (0.019)	-0.248*** (0.020)	-0.248*** (0.019)
Vote Share Margin Previous	2.819*** (0.196)	2.663*** (0.200)	2.847*** (0.197)	2.778*** (0.199)	2.953*** (0.267)	2.890*** (0.197)	2.903*** (0.197)	2.890*** (0.196)
Incumbent X Vote Share Margin Previous	-2.274*** (0.263)	-1.957*** (0.289)	-2.197*** (0.269)	-2.011*** (0.277)	-2.352*** (0.344)	-2.216*** (0.270)	-2.223*** (0.270)	-2.185*** (0.271)
Incumbent X ENP	0.004 (0.018)							
Incumbent X ENP Previous		0.028 (0.020)						
Incumbent X Number Candidates			-0.029 (0.020)					
Incumbent X Number Candidates Previous				-0.015 (0.021)				
Incumbent X Vote Share Variance Previous					-0.003 (0.025)			
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	0.370*** (0.013)	0.367*** (0.013)	0.370*** (0.013)	0.368*** (0.013)	0.407*** (0.016)	0.371*** (0.013)	0.372*** (0.013)	0.371*** (0.013)
Observations	8,919	8,913	8,919	8,913	5,441	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.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the evidence in support of my contention that, in contexts of weak party systems, the electoral connection can break down if oversight institutions are not sufficiently strong. One important set of evidence comes from the process of passing a ban on re-election of mayors. From the transcripts of Congressional debates, it becomes clear that weak horizontal accountability underpins lawmakers' worry about re-election. Rather than re-election serving to incentivize good performance, as Mayhew (1974) argued, in contexts of weak governmental oversight, politicians' drive to win a second term pushes them to focus on an easier route to re-election through gift giving or one-off, small-scale public works projects delivered to just enough supporters to get re-elected. Nonexistent sanctions also were seen as increasing the likelihood that public monies would be used for re-election campaigns, and that this would only generate more corruption. As a result, without effective oversight, the second-best solution would be banning the possibility of re-election outright.

I also present findings linking voter trust in oversight institutions with the likelihood of re-electing incumbent mayors. In particular, I provide evidence that strengthening horizontal accountability may offer a possible solution to the breakdown of the electoral connection. Returning to the regression discontinuity design that helped identify a mayoral incumbency disadvantage, I modify the set-up to test for whether voter trust in horizontal accountability allows mayors to overcome their electoral handicap. I find that incumbents who run in municipalities where respondents report higher levels of trust in oversight institutions are more likely to win re-election than incumbents from municipalities with lower trust. Though focused particularly on the incumbency disadvantage, these findings that trust in oversight institutions

mediates anti-incumbent bias also introduces the possibility that strengthening oversight may have similar positive impacts on the other phenomenon characteristic of the electoral dis-connection, including the rejection of even good performing incumbents and support for banning re-election on the whole.

In the last section of the chapter, I delve into the question of rejecting alternative explanations, summarizing tests I conducted in previous chapters as well as presenting the results of additional methods. I use a range of methodologies, including both the conjoint survey experiment and the regression discontinuity design, to discount two main alternative hypotheses, good performance and access to performance information. Using these methods, I am able to show that these alternative accounts do a poor job of explaining both the incumbency disadvantage and voters' tendency to prefer challengers even over incumbents who perform well in office. Drawing on the regression discontinuity design, I also show that political competition and the use of the recall do not seem to impact the systemic electoral handicap face by incumbents due to holding office. Though focused only on one example of the electoral dis-connection, these findings rejecting alternative explanations for the incumbency disadvantage would, by extension, reasonably apply to the other political behavior related to the electoral dis-connection. Together, this set of tests provides important support for my contention that the best explanation for the breakdown in the electoral connection is weakness in horizontal accountability.

7 | Conclusions

In this concluding chapter, I address the implications of my findings for our understanding of how democratic accountability operates, and by extension, how it can be improved. To do so, I consider how the project contributes to existing debates related to electoral accountability, political parties and democratic functioning more broadly. I also elaborate on the kinds of settings where I would expect the theory to travel. By way of conclusion, I describe some future avenues of research building on my findings and consider the real-world implications of an electoral dis-connection such as the one I study here.

7.1 Academic Contributions

The introductory chapter discusses at some length how the study and its findings contribute to the academic literature on accountability, political parties and democracy more broadly. I revisit and build on those contributions briefly here.

As I suggested earlier, my study offers some modifications to the existing theoretical accounts of electoral accountability. My findings, first, offer a clear setting where electoral accountability has failed, but where the dominant explanation for weak accountability—that voters do not sanction because they cannot access or effectively use information about incumbent performance—does not apply. In fact, the results suggest that information about current performance may actually be-

come uninformative for predicting the likelihood of future performance, if horizontal accountability institutions are not sufficiently strong. Most accounts of electoral accountability assume continuity in the likelihood of good performance across time. However, my findings depict a setting characterized by a decoupling of current and future performance. More broadly, retrospective voting models only focus on one assessment voters make, evaluating incumbent past performance. My findings suggest they are missing a second and crucial assessment: whether good current performance usefully predicts good future performance.

My study also offers a way to unite the literatures on distinct accountability types—electoral, horizontal and social—by emphasizing that multiple types may be inter-twined. Some theoretical work has considered how accountability types may interact (see e.g. O'Donnell 2006), though not as much attention has been paid in empirical studies. Benjamin Olken's experimental design from Indonesia (2007) examined corruption in village-level road projects, and found that the impact of increased horizontal accountability, by randomly informing village leaders that public spending on the road project would be audited by the central government, not only decreased corruption, but the decline was greatest in villages in which the leader was up for re-election. He suggests horizontal accountability works better when electoral accountability is strong, because the threat of sanctions from central oversight institutions is weaker than the threat of losing a re-election when voter sanctioning is credible. However, I consider the relationship in the opposite direction, examining how the quality of horizontal accountability determines the functioning of electoral accountability, and not vice versa. Most similarly to my work, O'Donnell (1998) highlights how social accountability may be eroded if horizontal accountability is weak, since in the absence of credible sanctions, social accountability efforts might ultimately end in only distrust and disengagement. My study offers support for an

additional hypothesis, that weak horizontal accountability reduces the effectiveness of electoral accountability.

Finally, a recent though now somewhat extensive literature has documented the decline of both individual parties and of party systems. We know less, however, about the political impacts and implications of party weakness. This study offers insights into how party decline ultimately weakens both the electoral connection and electoral accountability, and highlights the kind of institutional arrangements necessary to compensate for weak parties in these settings. In particular, the findings suggest it may be possible to re-conceive of horizontal accountability institutions as acting as substitutes for the accountability-related functions of political parties when party systems are weak.

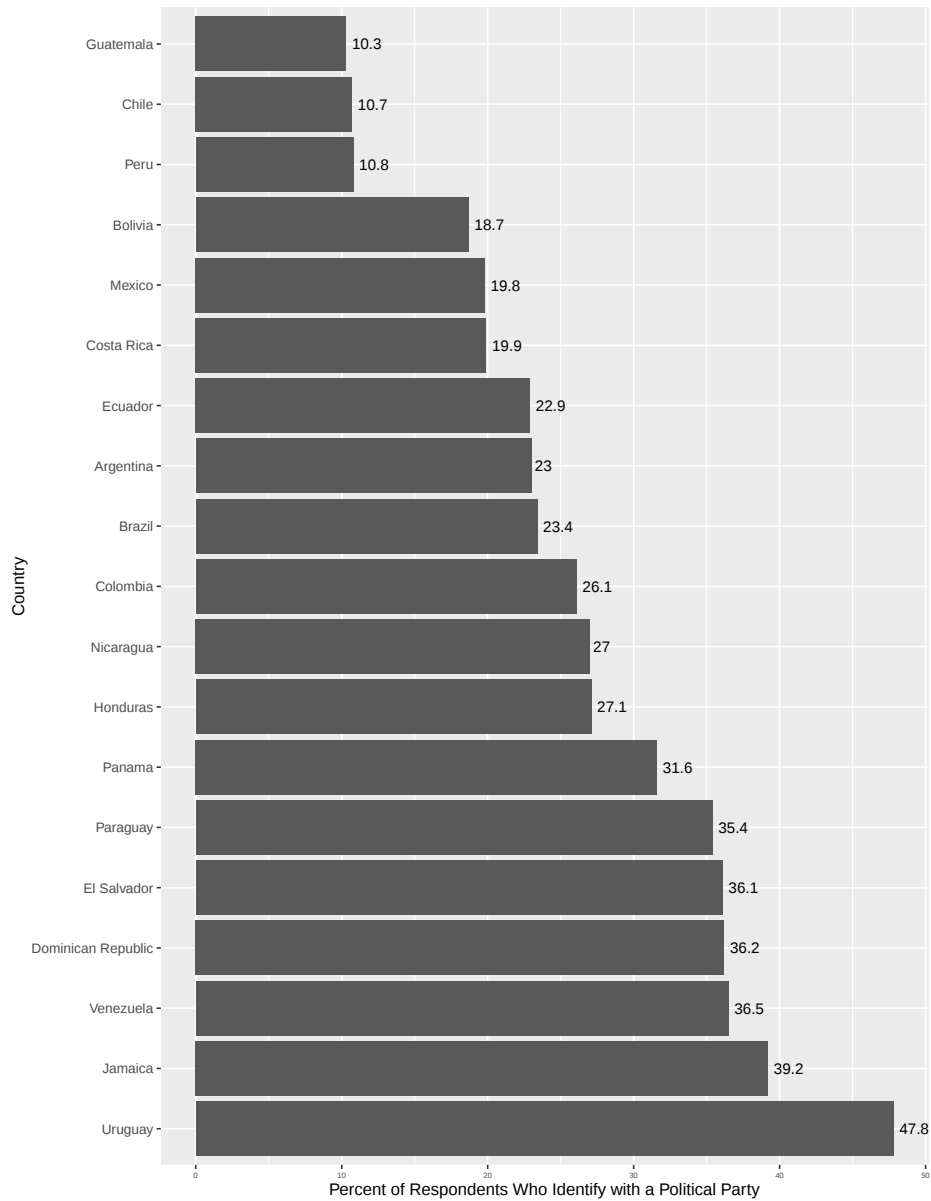
7.2 Generalizability of the Theory

I contend that there is a strong case for the theory being generalizable to other contexts. For now, I consider possible extensions to Latin American countries, though I argue the theory would apply to developing countries in other regions as well, wherever party system collapse and weak oversight institutions make the electoral connection vulnerable to breakdown.

As I argued, strong parties are important for maintaining the electoral connection, particularly by ensuring voter support for incumbents and re-election, both by creating incentives for incumbents to perform well and by facilitating the distribution of particularistic benefits. Many other Latin American countries have weak parties (Lupu 2016; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring 2018; Seawright 2012), and it is precisely in these settings where it might be possible for an electoral dis-connection to emerge.

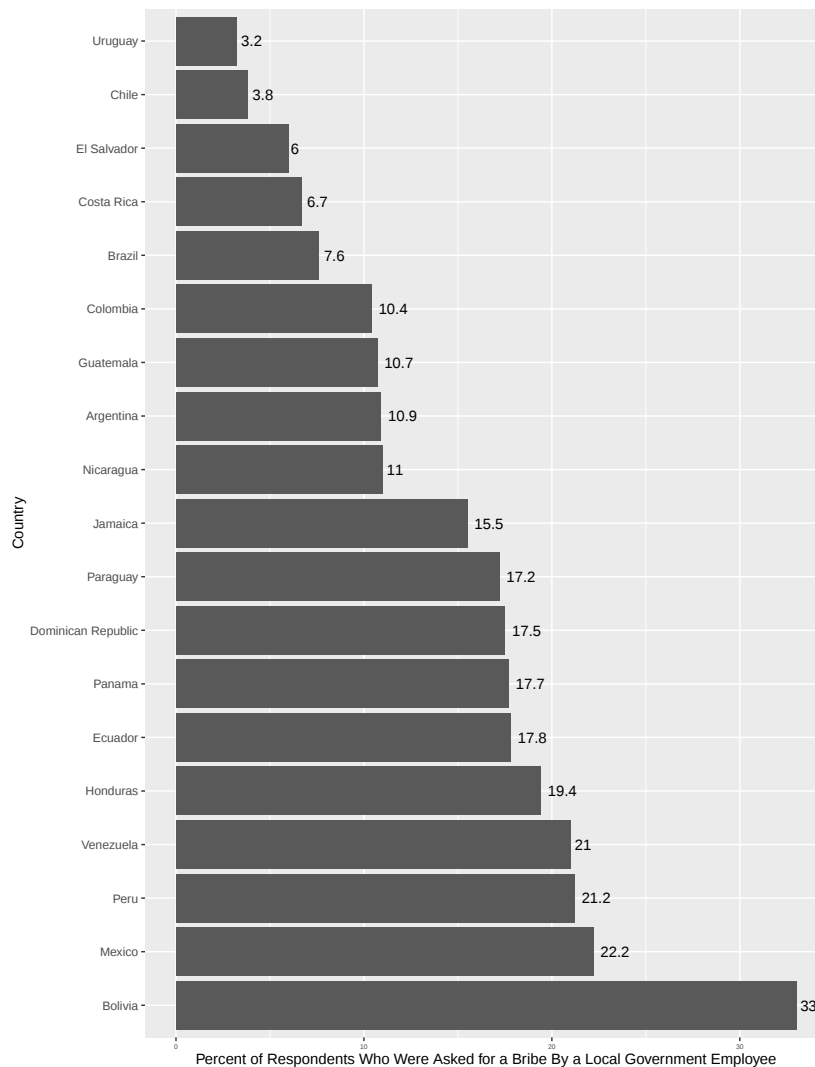
Scholars who specialize in party politics in Latin America have used a range of indicators, like variability in the composition of parties in the system and instability in parties' electoral viability and ideological platforms, to rank countries in terms of party strength. In addition to Peru, countries like Guatemala, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica and Colombia also are considered to have weak party systems (Mainwaring 2018). Survey data assessing partisanship largely confirms this ranking. In the 2018 round of the LAPOP public opinion survey of Latin American states, many of these very same countries have the lowest rates of self-reported partisan ties, as Figure 7.1 shows.

Beyond considering their party strength, many of these countries are some of the weakest states in Latin America, and with ineffective systems of governmental oversight. This is reflected, for example, in their poor outcomes in terms of controlling corruption. Survey data suggests a high frequency of corruption at the local level in these countries. For example, respondents who reported having some interaction with their local municipality in the 2018 LAPOP survey, were then asked a follow-up question about whether they were asked for a bribe as part of the process. Figure 7.2 reports the country averages of respondents who said 'yes'. Countries with weak party systems, like Peru, Panama, Ecuador, and especially Bolivia, report some of the highest rates across the region.



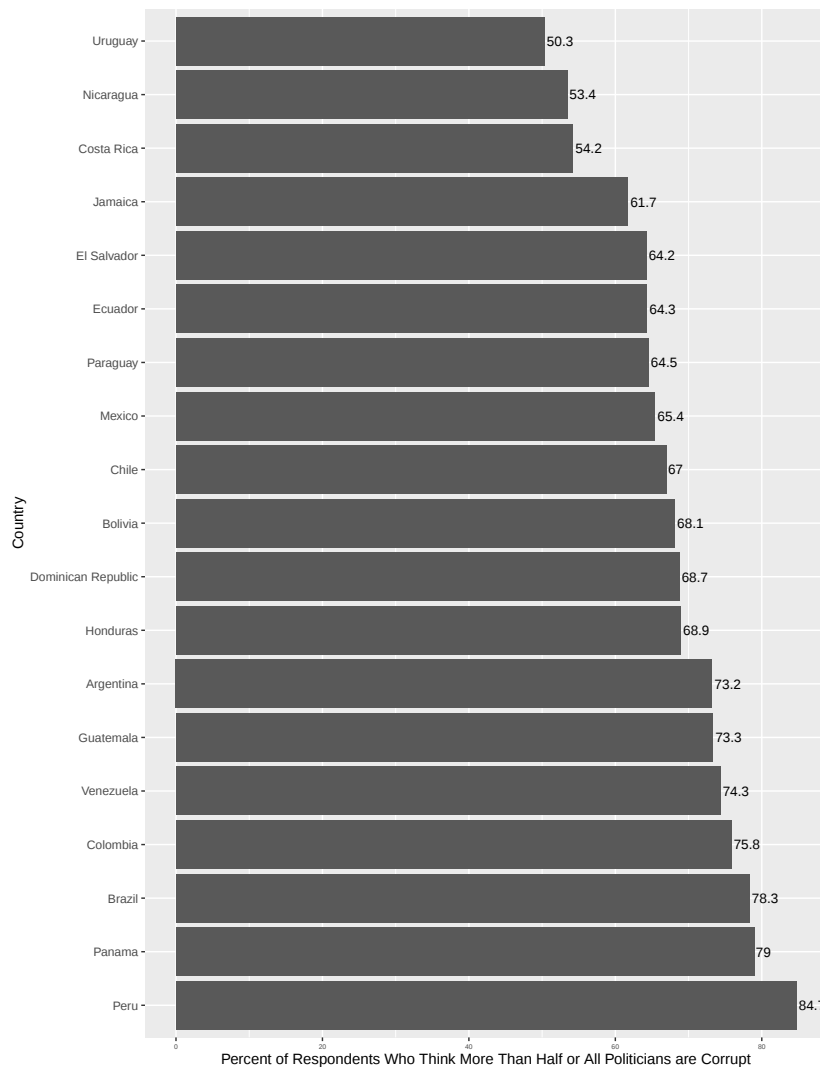
Data from the 2018 round of the LAPOP public opinion survey, available at: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/request-datasets.php>. Reported values are country average of 'yes' responses to the question 'Do you currently identify with a political party?'.

Figure 7.1: Partisanship in Latin America



Data from the 2018 round of the LAPOP public opinion survey, available at: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/request-datasets.php>. Reported values are country average of 'yes' responses to the question 'In the last twelve months, to process any kind of document in your municipal government, like a permit for example, did you have to pay any money above that required by law?'. The question was only asked of respondents who had previously answered 'yes' to the question 'In the last twelve months, did you have any official dealings in the municipality/local government?'

Figure 7.2: Experience with Corruption in Municipal Government in Latin America



Data from the 2018 round of the LAPOP public opinion survey, available at: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/request-datasets.php>. The question asked: Thinking of the politicians in (country name), how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption? Answer options: None; Less than half; Half; More than half; All. The values reported here are the percentage of respondents per country who reported either 'More than half' or 'All'.

Figure 7.3: Latin American Perceptions of the Proportion of Politicians that are Corrupt

Voters in some of these countries may also be developing the kinds of disdain for politicians that I argue is an important contributor to the electoral dis-connection. For example, survey data suggests that in many countries, voters have already begun to assume that the vast majority of politicians are corrupt, thus suggesting a questioning of their intrinsic motivation to serve. As Figure 7.3 shows, though Peru has the highest percentage of citizens who judge most politicians as corrupt, countries like Panama, Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala are not far behind.

Importantly, it is not just the case that some Latin American countries have the preconditions for an electoral dis-connection, such as frail parties, weak institutions and high levels of citizen disdain and dissatisfaction with politicians. Initial evidence also suggests some of the downstream voter behaviors that indicate an electoral dis-connection in these very same countries.

For example, some countries have relatively low rates of mayoral re-election compared to the rest of the region. Recall that in Peru, incumbent re-election was about 33% across the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections. In Panama in 2019, it was 32% (Jiménez 2019). In Ecuador, mayors were re-elected 32% of the time in 2009, but the rate fell even further to only 22% in 2014 (Mejia Acosta and Meneses 2019). In Guatemala, incumbent re-election is the highest in the group at 41.2%, though it is still somewhat low (Morales Carrera 2014).

Furthermore, in two of these countries, scholars have already found evidence of an incumbency disadvantage. In both Guatemala (Morales Carrera 2014) and Brazil (Klašnja and Titiunik 2017), evidence from regression discontinuity designs like I employ in this study suggest that mayors face a systematically lower likelihood of re-election than challengers, and therefore that, as in the case of Peru, challengers may be systematically favored over incumbents. Future research in these and other settings would need to confirm the extent to which the voter rejection of re-election

is divorced from performance to be sure that it is indicative of an electoral dis-connection. Still, these cases offer important suggestive evidence that the electoral connection may be vulnerable to breakdown in countries other than Peru.

7.3 Directions for Future Research

The discussion of generalizability already suggests an important avenue of future research: assessing whether other countries might already exhibit an electoral dis-connection, and if so, the extent to which frail political parties and weak horizontal accountability precipitated the decline. Another natural research question that emerges, assuming the electoral connection is indeed vulnerable to breakdown, concerns the ways that it might be repaired. I offer here some areas of future study that would not only help identify potential remedies for the electoral dis-connection, but would also continue to shed light on how exactly that dis-connection emerged.

The main argument I presented in this manuscript already hints at one potential solution to the electoral dis-connection: strengthening horizontal accountability. If, as I contend, weak oversight is at the heart of the story of how the electoral connection broke-down, then it only stands to reason that strengthening it could push that process in reverse. Empirical results I presented in Chapter 6 provide evidence for such a contention. Returning to the regression discontinuity design which suggested a mayoral incumbency disadvantage, I showed how in municipalities in which voters have greater trust in horizontal accountability institutions, incumbents are more likely to win re-election than incumbents who run in municipalities with less trust in oversight. If this is true, then improving institutions of horizontal accountability, and more importantly, citizens' belief in their effectiveness, should yield an increase in voters' willingness to support incumbents in their re-election bid, and perhaps even

shift their views on the benefits of re-election overall.

If what is doing the work is indeed voters' perceptions of external constraints on politicians' behavior in office, then it is also possible that alternative methods of oversight could function similarly in repairing the electoral connection. For example, fine-tuning the use of an existing formal tool—the recall—might improve the perception that politicians will face sanctions if they misbehave, though of course these are most useful in avoiding only the most egregious examples of poor behavior.

Social accountability, a concept which grew largely out of Latin America itself (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006), offers another alternative. As a type of vertical accountability between citizens and the state that occurs outside of the electoral cycle, it includes media, civil society and social organizations' efforts to hold elected officials accountable. One possible extension of my argument is that, if citizens believed that their social accountability efforts would prove successful, they might be more willing to re-elect an incumbent, by assuming their activism and advocacy would be enough to keep them in line in subsequent terms.

I also argued that political parties play a key role in maintaining the electoral connection, so again, improvements in the strength of party systems may also work to stem the tide of an electoral dis-connection. Evidence suggests that improving the strength of individual parties may also be effective, outside of changes to the strength of the system as a whole. In Brazil, the mayoral incumbency disadvantage seemed to be concentrated among weak parties, with politicians from more consolidated, programmatic parties seemingly immune to the electoral disadvantage of incumbency (Klašnja and Titiunik 2017).

In a separate vein, I argued that it was citizens' attitudes about incumbents and their likelihood of performing well in subsequent terms that are key to the maintenance of the electoral connection. More study is needed on how voter attitudes,

particularly about horizontal oversight, are formed, including whether it may be possible to improve citizen assessments of the extent to which politicians face constraints on their behavior in office, independently of those actual constraints.

Finally, the theory I put forth and test focuses exclusively on the voter side of the electoral accountability equation. Of course, politicians' strategic responses to voter behavior is an important part of the story. For example, politicians who become aware of voters' tendency not to re-elect may, in addition to perceiving even less of an incentive to perform well, decide simply not to run for re-election in the first place. There is some evidence from my study to suggest this may already be occurring. In the regression discontinuity design, over the three election years included in the study, the barely-won incumbents became even less and less likely to run over time. Future study of the electoral dis-connection could, and should, more adequately incorporate these strategic decisions, as well as the interplay of voter and politician dynamics more broadly.

7.4 Reflecting on Accountability in Peru and Beyond

Overall, if we assume that re-election has some role to play in generating accountability, then the results of this study, in which I identify the conditions under which re-election fails to generate political accountability, should cause some alarm. To the extent that incumbents begin to realize their chances of being rewarded for their effort are low, it reduces their incentive to perform. Though more focus has traditionally been placed on punishing poor performers, rewarding good performers is just as important for ensuring responsive and high quality government performance (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 assume the worst about incumbents who then increasingly live up to those poor expectations. Over time, this could also lead to disillusionment with democracy itself (Svolik 2013).

In the case of Peru, there seems to be little to indicate that the electoral connection will soon be repaired. Of course, the new law banning re-election has made the question of how voters view incumbents a moot point. That said, even if re-election were to be reinstated, Peruvians' attitudes towards politicians overall seem unlikely to improve any time soon, especially considering the ongoing corruption scandals at the national level and the criminal cases in process against all of the country's recent ex-Presidents. Initiatives to strengthen horizontal accountability seem to be at a stand-still. And all of this is occurring in a context where political parties continue to be extremely weak.

More broadly, this research was motivated by a long-standing interest in how ordinary citizens in developing countries hold their elected officials accountable, especially at the local level, where unaccountable government often translates into a lack of much-needed social policies and public services. Though the decentralization push in the 2000s brought new levels of government, almost 20 years later, scholars still struggle to understand how to improve these governments' responsiveness. Many local governments are facing a governance and accountability crisis. Mayors have been implicated in well-publicized corruption scandals and communities have been rocked by violent protests over the low quality public services they provide. Poor governance not only has real consequences for development, but may also have detrimental spillover effects such as disillusionment with democracy and disengagement from the political process.

Understanding how electoral accountability operates, and when and where it ceases to work, is important not only from an academic standpoint, but from a

normative one as well. Citizens around the world continue to voice their frustration and anger with the work of their elected officials. In low- and middle-income countries, where individuals' well-being is even more closely tied to the public services, economic programs and social welfare policies they receive, the question of how to get politicians to do what voters want becomes even more urgent.

| Appendices

A | Regression Discontinuity Design Robustness Checks

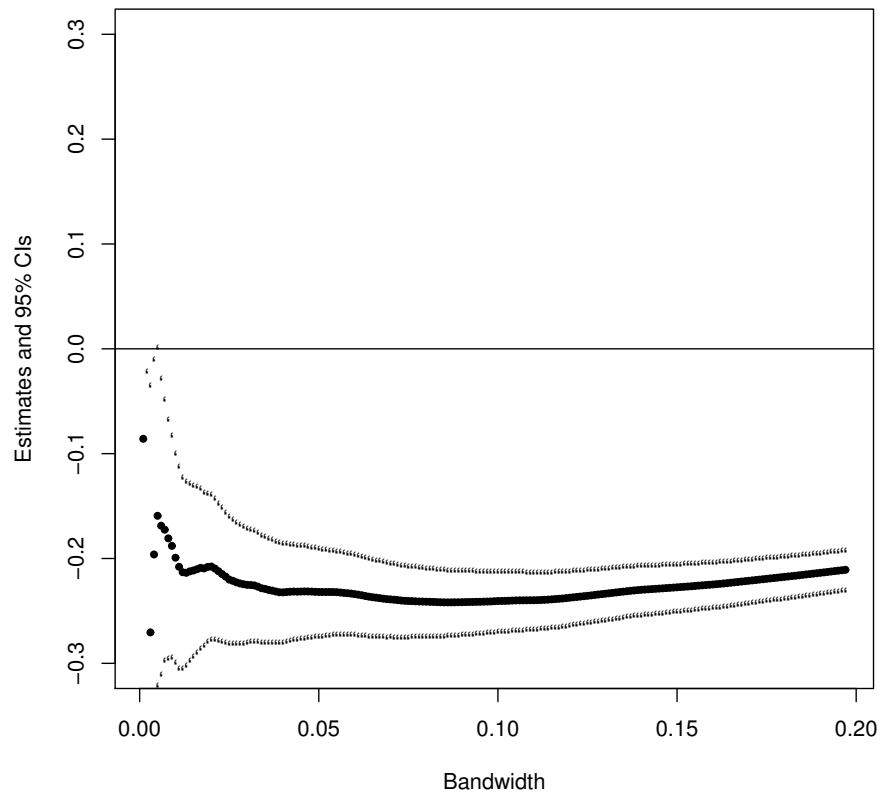
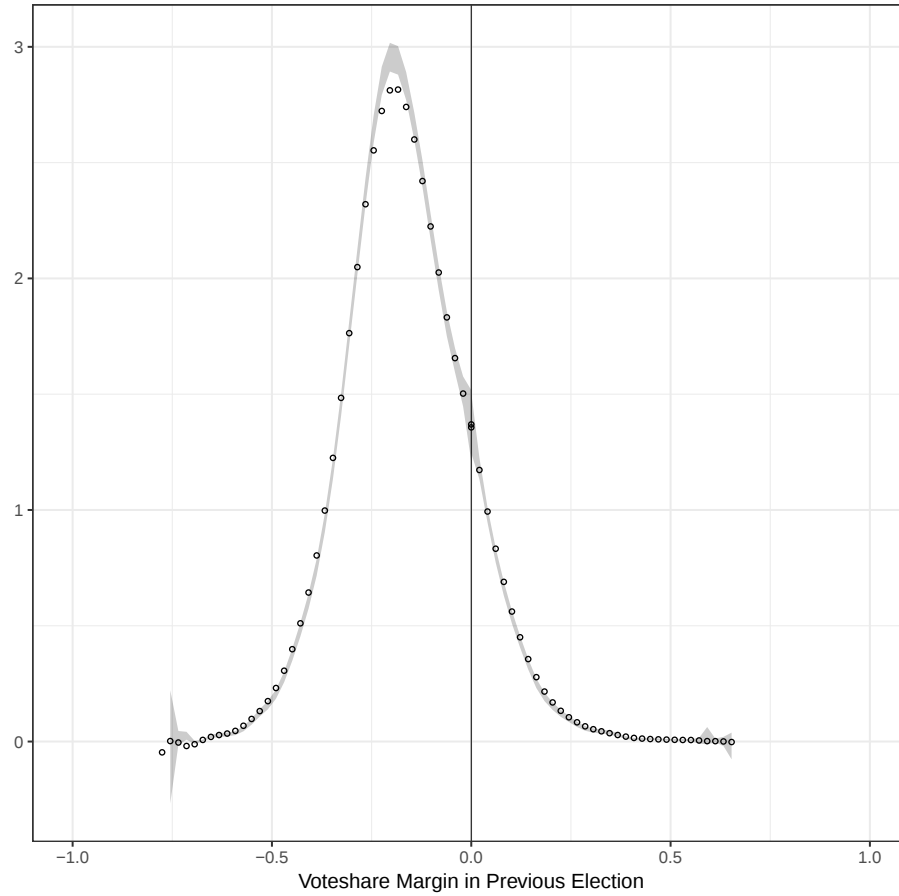


Figure A.1: RDD Estimates' Sensitivity to Bandwidth Choice



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 vote share margin below zero) than there are winners (observations with vote share margin above zero).

Figure A.2: McCrary Density Test

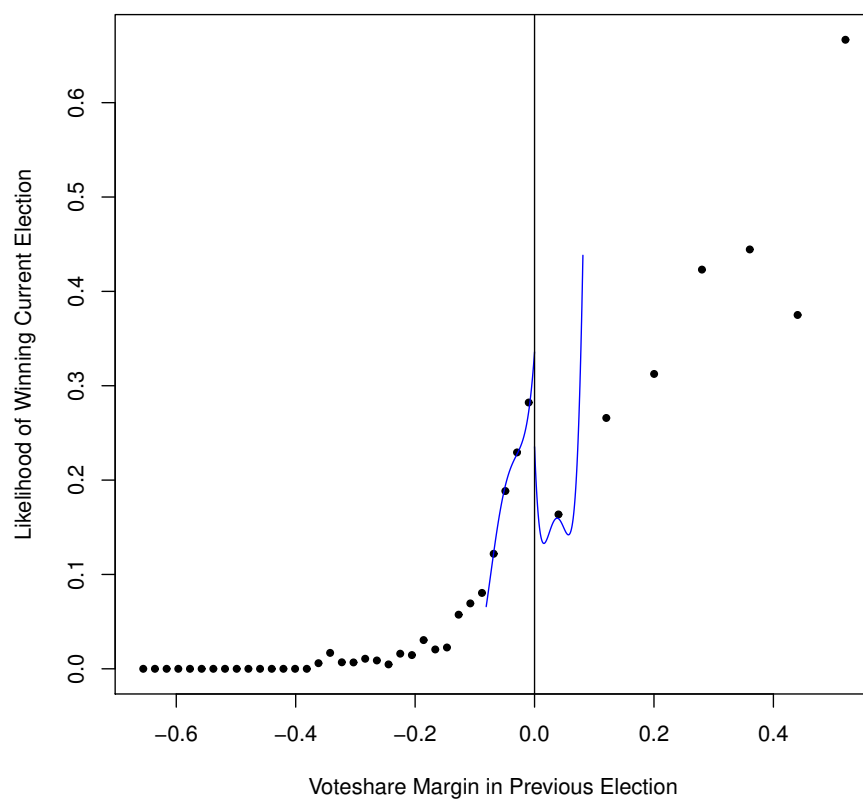


Figure A.3: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2006

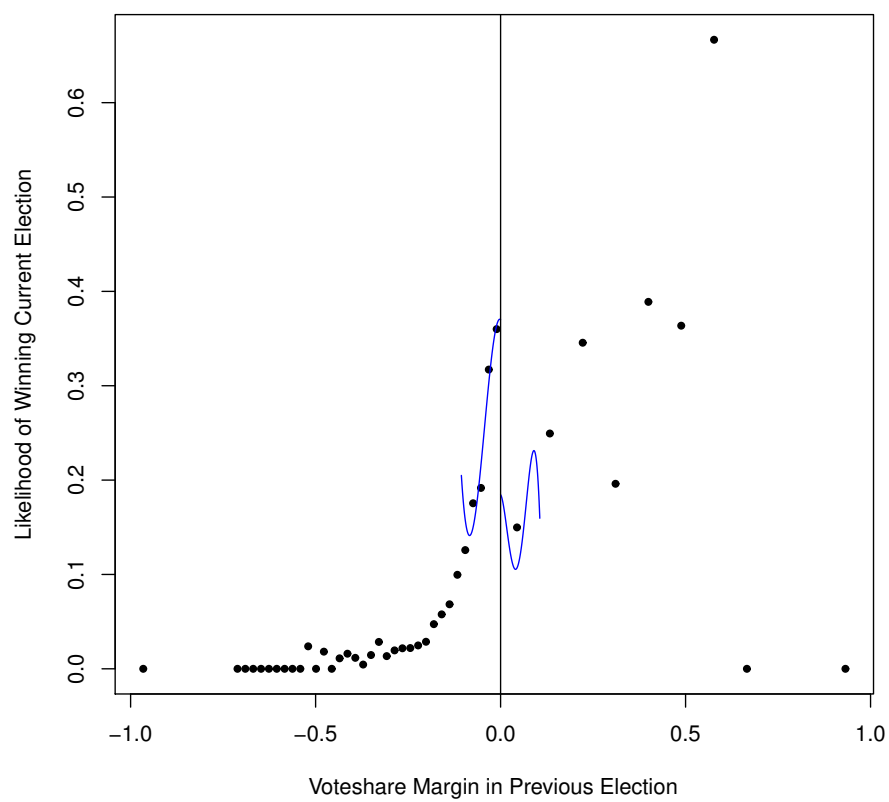


Figure A.4: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2010

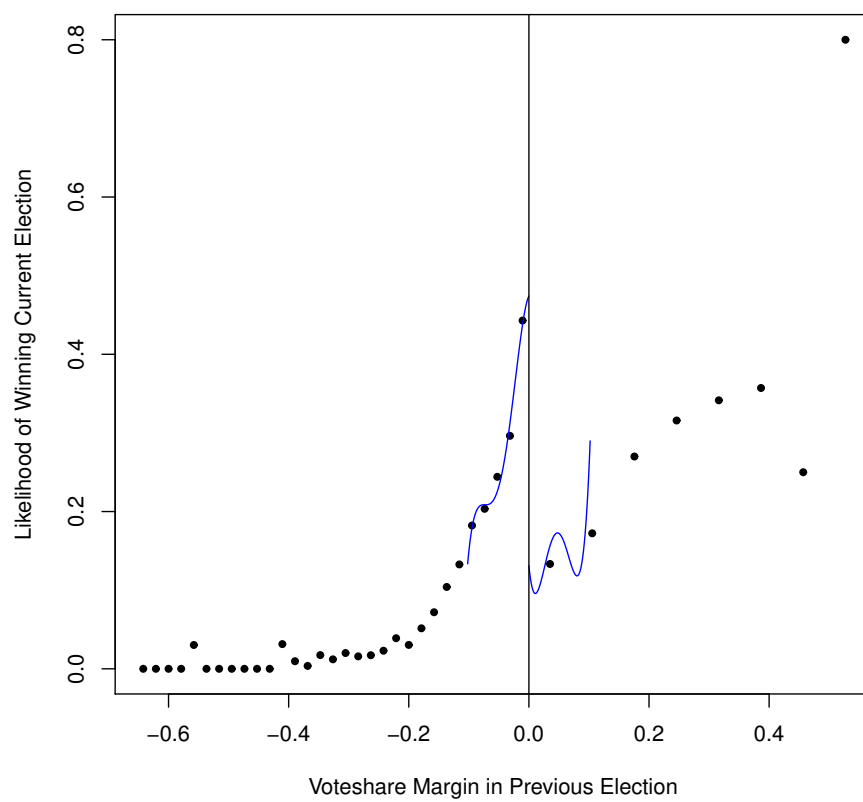
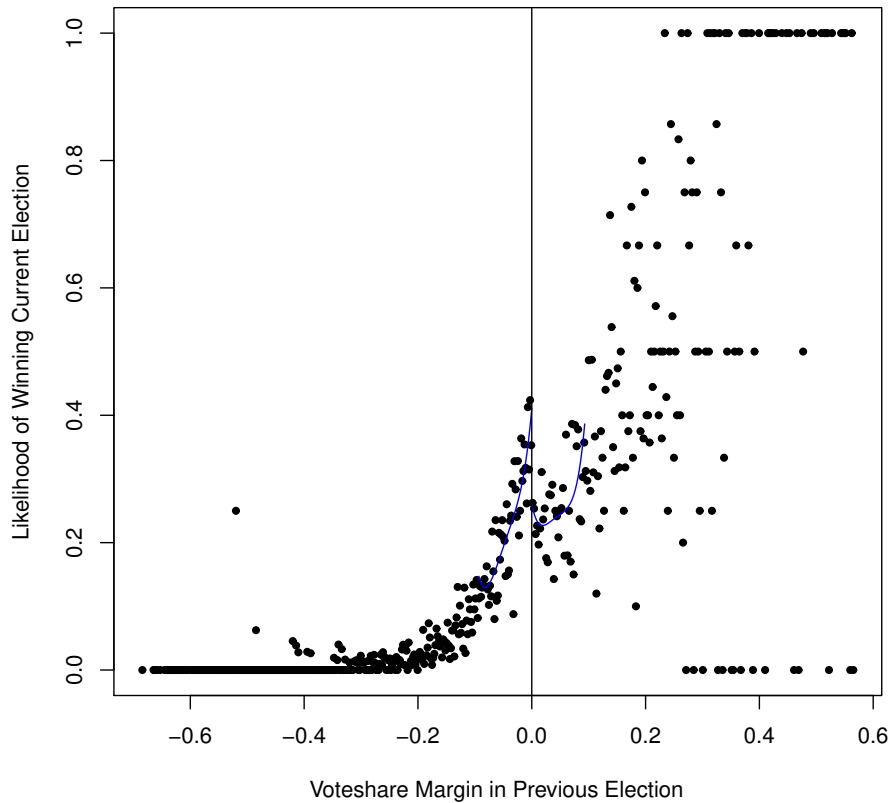
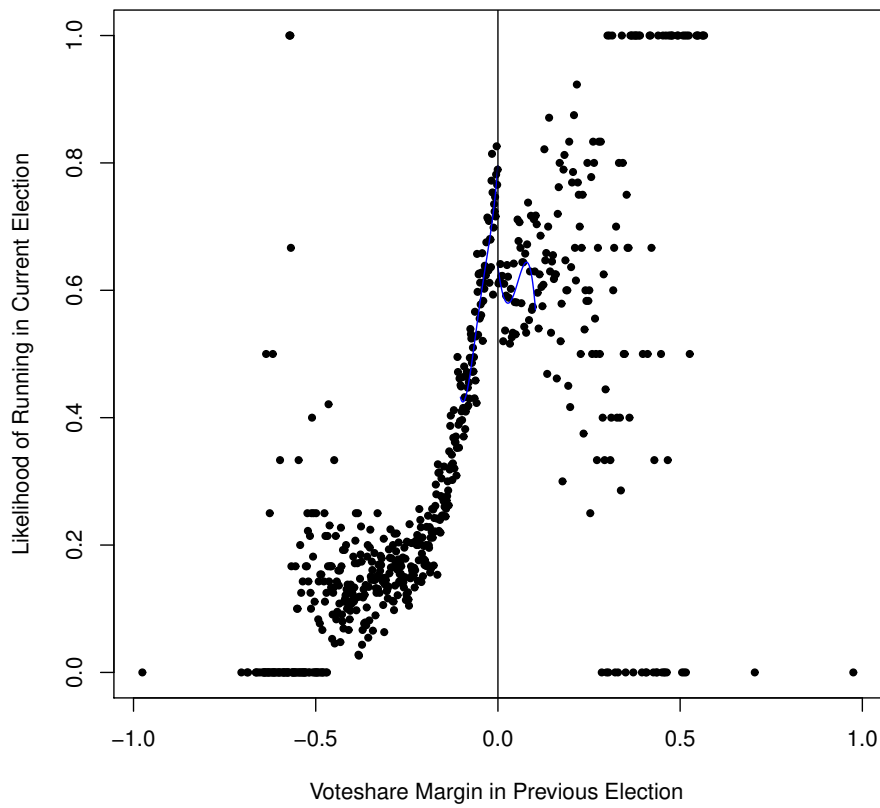


Figure A.5: Incumbency Disadvantage in Peruvian Mayoral Elections, 2014



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.6: Incumbency Disadvantage Conditional on Incumbent Re-Running, 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 $<.001$.

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

A.0.1 Randomization Inference

I find similar results using the randomization inference approach described in Cattaneo, Frandsen, and 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 .033), 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 28 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 0.114). 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.

B | Additional Information about the Conjoint Experiment

Table B.1: Candidate Attributes (Spanish Language) Used in Conjoint Experiment

Candidate Attribute	Language Used in the Profile
Postulantes	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la re-elección.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la re-elección. Como alcalde, ha hecho muchas obras públicas, como por ejemplo calles y canales de riego.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la re-elección. Como alcalde, no ha hecho casi ninguna obra pública, por ejemplo ninguna calle ni ning'un canal de riego.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la re-elección. Como alcalde, daba ayuda financiera a la población cuando se lo pedían.
	Es el alcalde actual postulando a la re-elección. Como alcalde, no daba ayuda financiera a la población cuando se lo pedían.
	Es uno de los otros 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.

Table B.2: Conjoint Experiment Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCE)

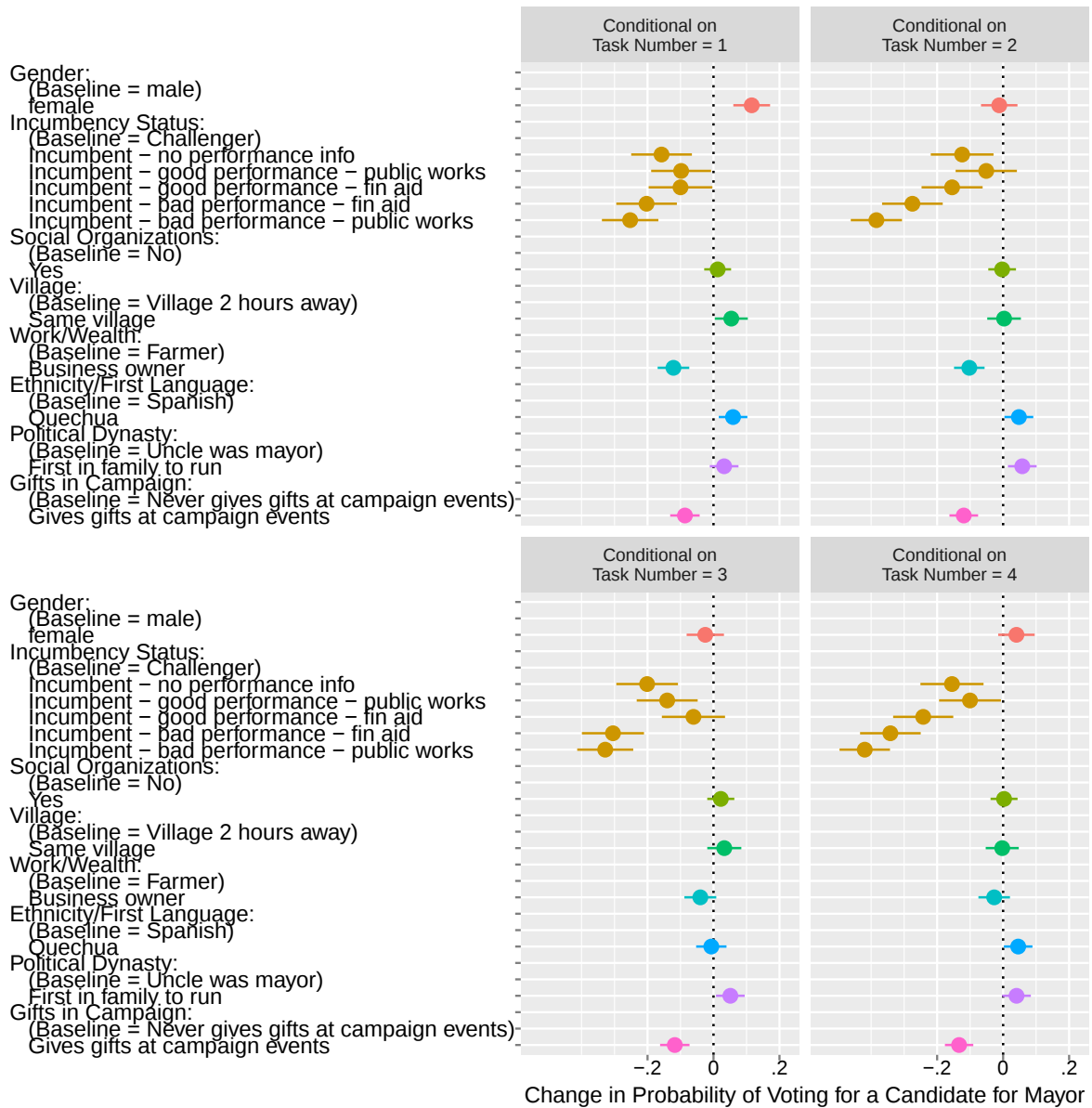
Attribute	Level	AMCE Estimate
Political Dynasty	<i>Baseline: Uncle was also previously mayor</i> First in family to run	0.048 *** (0.0114)
Gender	<i>Baseline: Male</i> Female	0.031 * (0.0143)
Gifts in Campaigns	<i>Baseline: Does not give gifts</i> Gives gifts	-0.115 *** (0.012)
Incumbent	<i>Baseline: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

Notes: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Table B.2 presents point estimates and p-values for each of the candidate attributes. Figure 4.1 in the main text depicts the same results visually.

C | Conjoint Experiment Robustness Checks

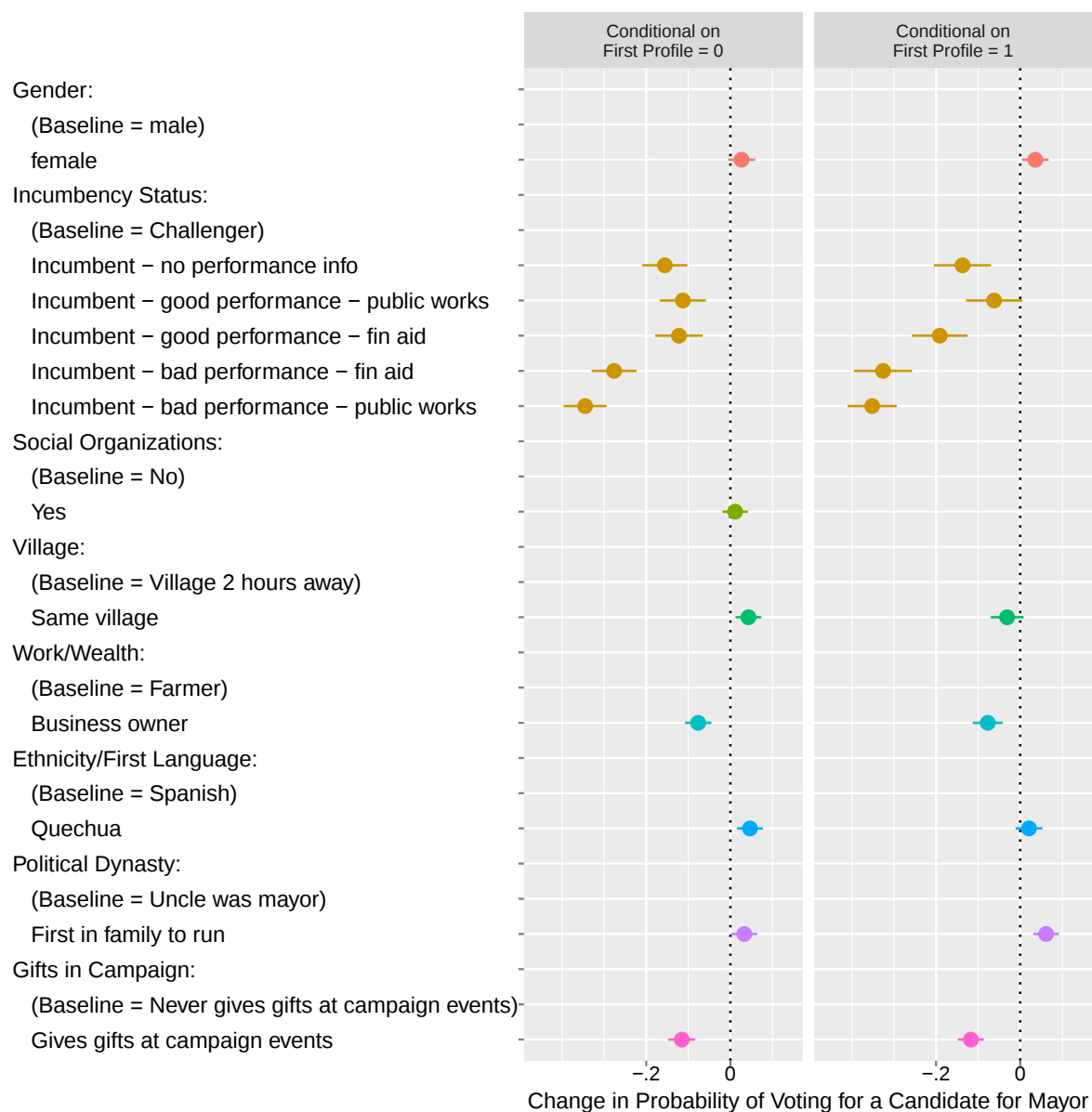
Table C.1: Randomization Check: Frequency of Candidate Attributes

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 <i>centro poblado</i> (village)	50.6%	50%
	From other <i>centro poblado</i> (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%	66.6%
	Female	35.9%	33.3%



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 C.1: Conjoint Results Conditional on Task Number



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.

Figure C.2: Conjoint Results Conditional on Profile Order

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

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

D | Conjoint Experiment Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits Conditional on Respondent Characteristics

These plots show the effect sizes of the eight candidate traits conditional on six different respondent characteristics: type of municipality in which the respondent lives; gender; income; first language; education; and age.

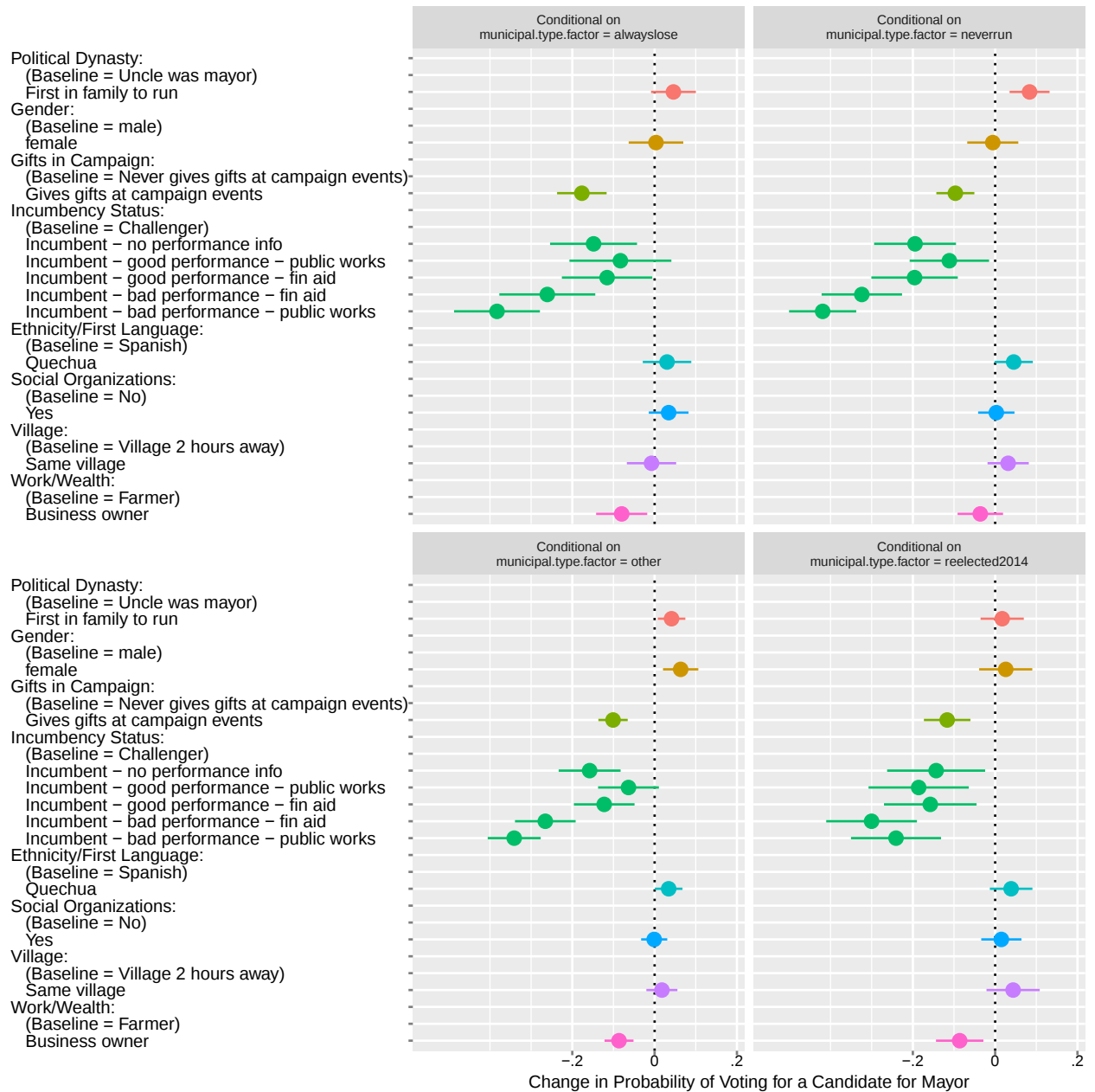


Figure D.1: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Municipality Type

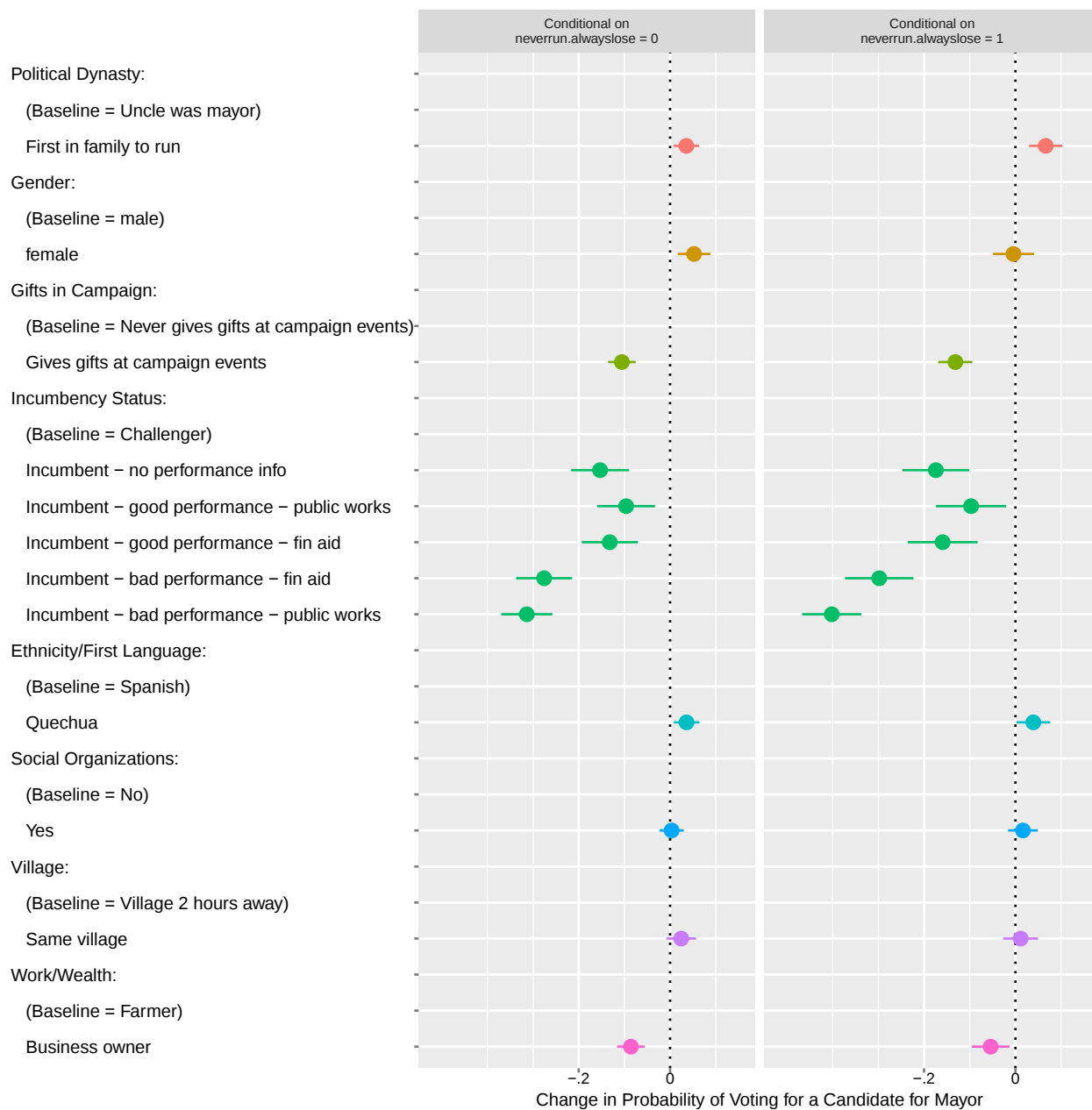


Figure D.2: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Municipality Type, Never Run-Always Lose

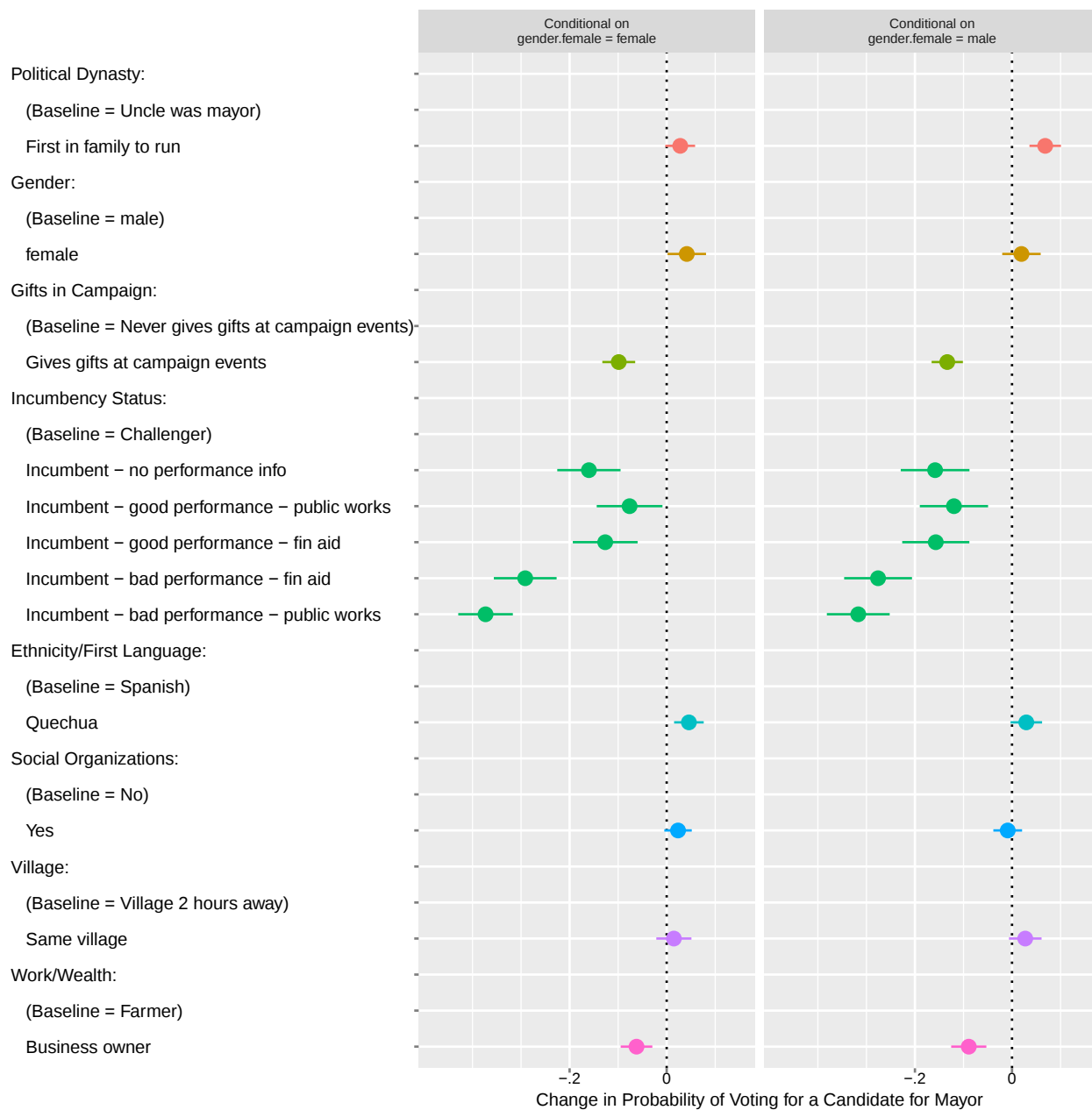


Figure D.3: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Gender

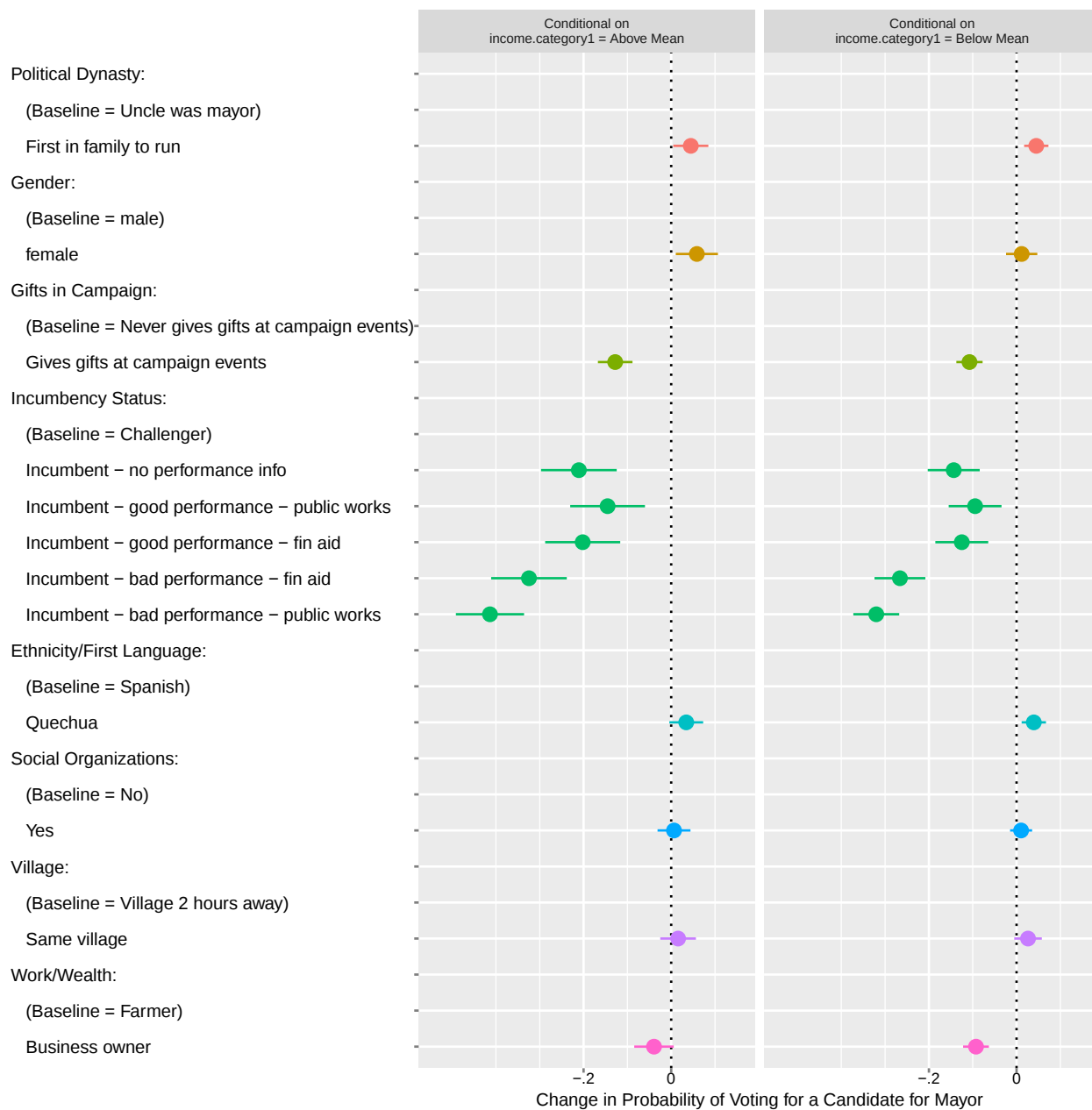


Figure D.4: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Income

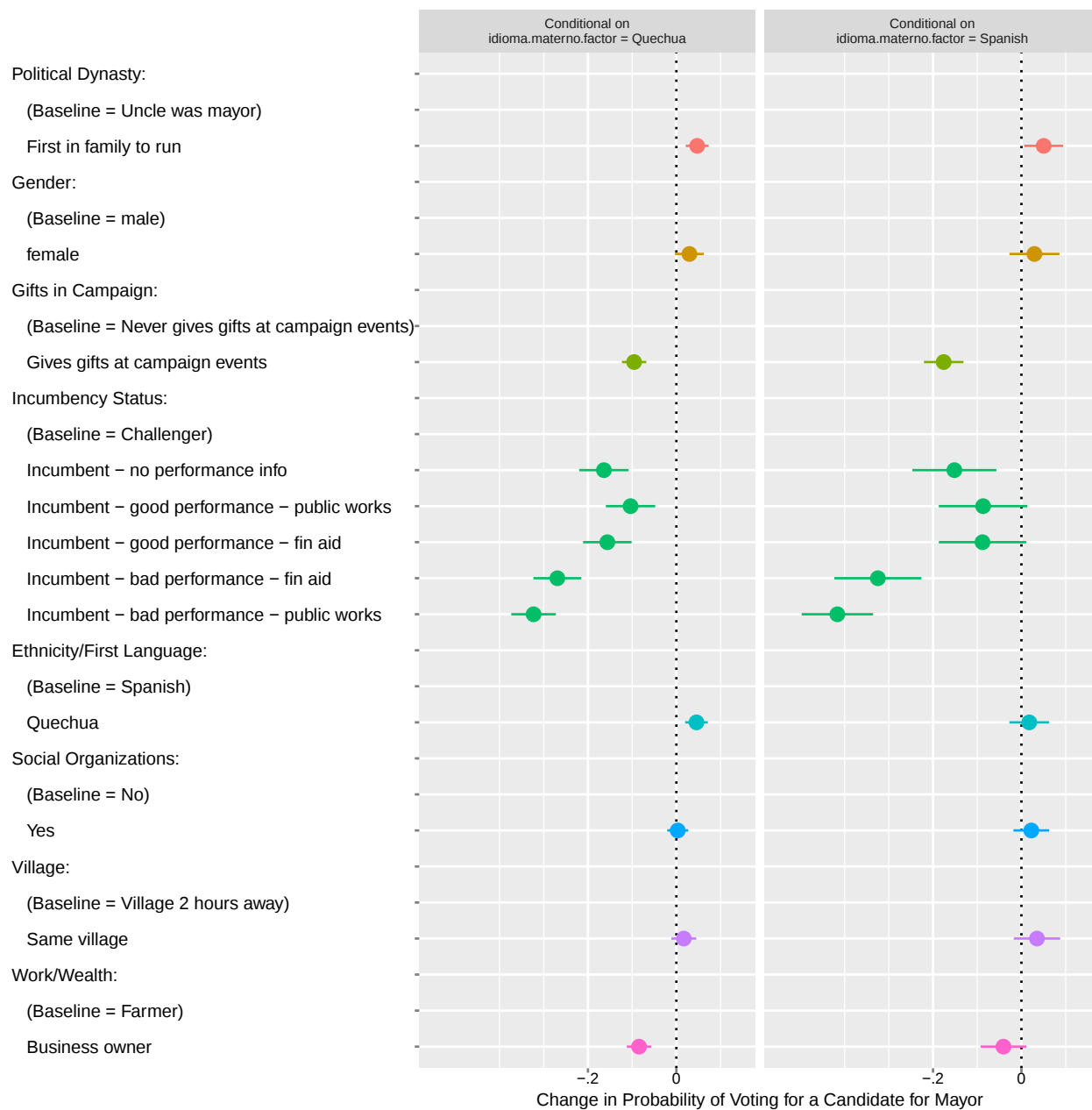


Figure D.5: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent First Language

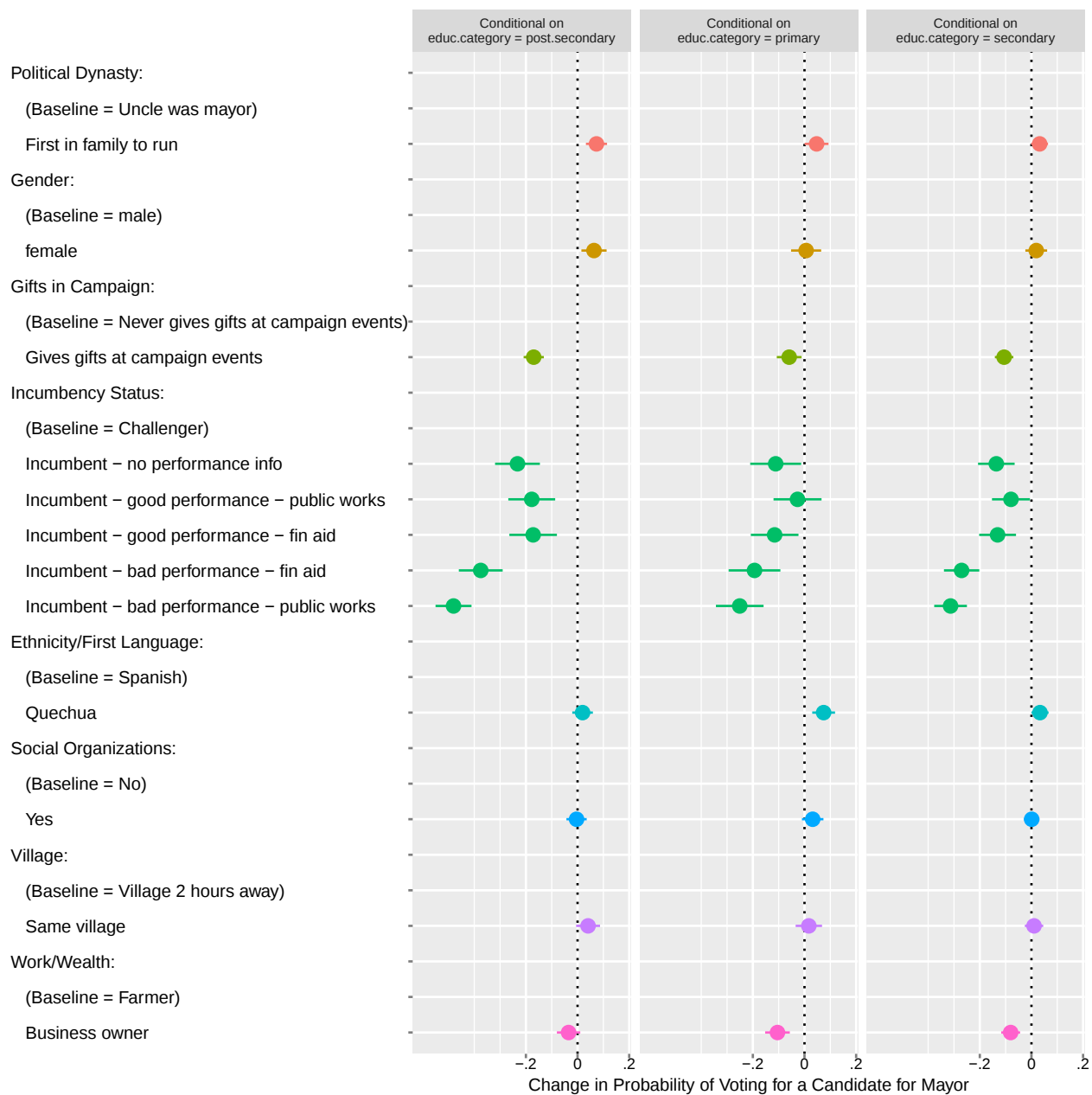


Figure D.6: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Education

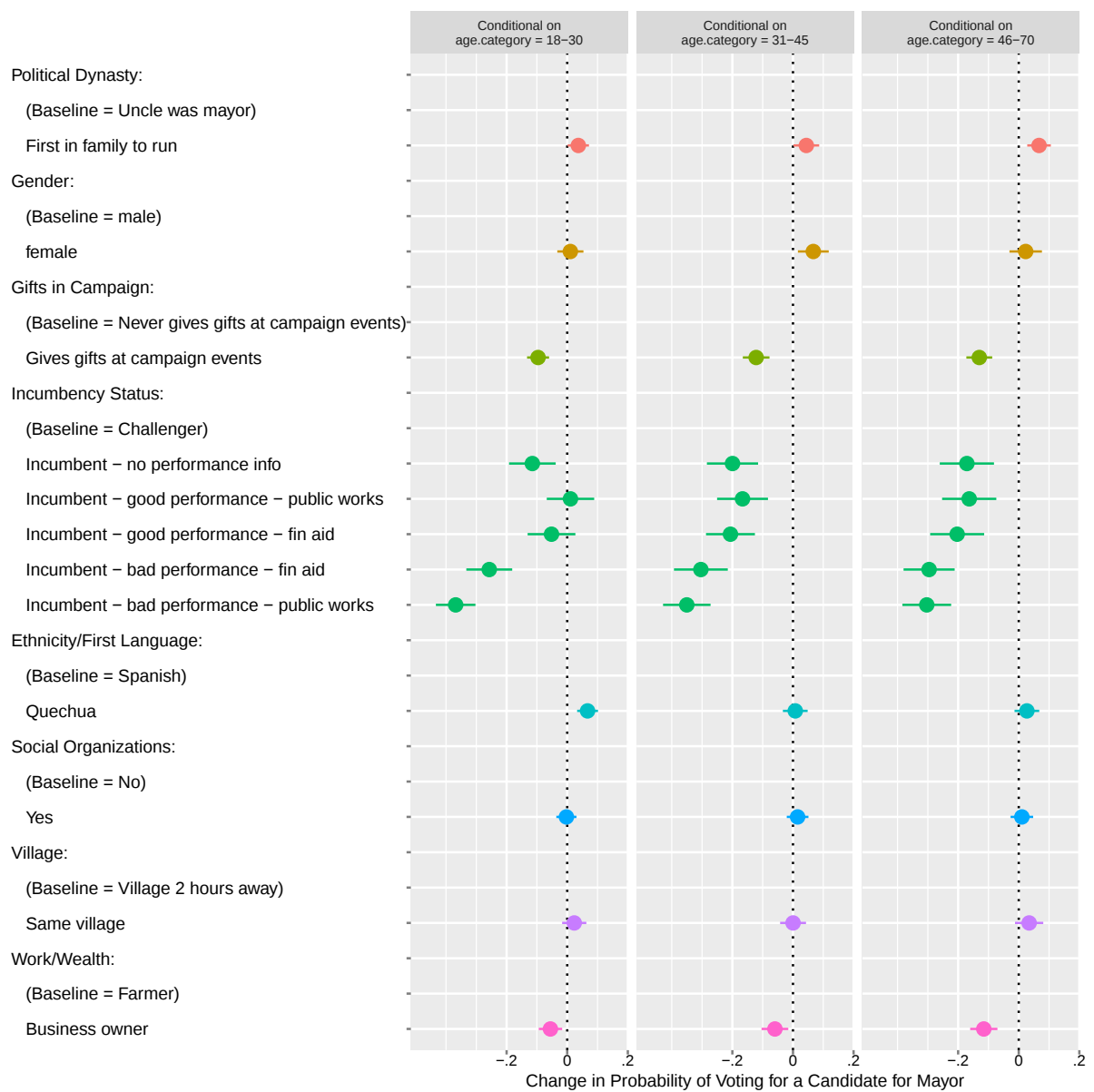


Figure D.7: Conditional Effect Sizes of Candidate Traits on Voting for a Candidate for Mayor - Conditional on Respondent Age

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