Coordination and Incumbency Advantage in Multi-Party Systems - Evidence from French Elections

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Abstract

Free and fair elections should incentivize elected officials to exert effort and enable citizens to select representative politicians and occasionally replace incumbents. However, incumbency advantage and coordination failures possible in multi-party systems may jeopardize this process. We ask whether these two forces compound each other. Using an RDD in French two-round local and parliamentary elections, we find that close winners are more likely to run again and to win the next election by 33 and 25 percentage points, respectively. Incumbents who run again personalize their campaign communication more and face fewer ideologically close competitors, revealing that parties from the incumbent's orientation coordinate more effectively than parties on the losing side. A complementary RDD shows that candidates who marginally qualify for the runoff also rally new voters. We conclude that party coordination on the incumbent and voter coordination on candidates who won or gained visibility in a previous election both contribute to incumbents' future success.

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1 Introduction

In theory, free and fair elections can improve the selection of politicians and decrease moral hazard: citizens can use elections to choose leaders who are competent and aligned with their preferences (Downs 1957; Osborne and Slivinski 1996; Besley and Coate 1997; Fearon 1999), and the prospect of facing reelection gives politicians incentives to exert effort (Barro 1973; Ferejohn 1986; Besley 2006). In practice, bad incumbents may manage to get reelected and reelection incentives may be weakened if holding power gives a systematic advantage over competitors. A large literature has documented the existence of an incumbency advantage in the United States and in other countries using first-past-the-post elections, where individual races tend to be dominated by only two or a handful of parties (e.g., Lee (2008)). Incumbents can provide pork barrel spending, and they often obtain more media coverage and larger electoral campaign funding. These advantages may scare off high quality challengers and jeopardize the process of democratic alternation and elite renewal. We refer to these mechanisms existing in two-party systems as "direct" contributors to the incumbency advantage.

In multi-party settings, in which a large number of candidates compete for any seat, a second, more indirect, force can contribute to the victory of bad politicians: coordination failures. Parties from the same orientation (e.g., parties on the left) have incentives to reach candidate dropout agreements, in order to reduce the number of ideologically-close competitors and increase their chances of winning. Furthermore, voters may strategically rally behind stronger candidates. However, the coordination efforts of parties and voters may fail (e.g., Pons and Tricaud (2018)).

In this paper, we ask whether the mechanisms directly giving incumbents an advantage and coordination issues compound each other. Coordination issues might reinforce direct mechanisms of incumbency advantage if incumbents seeking reelection are better able to prevent ideologically close candidates from entering the race or to rally their base voters. Conversely, parties defeated in the previous election may decide to join forces to avoid a new defeat and voters from the losing political orientation may coordinate on the most promising candidate. Moreover, new candidates may enter on the incumbent's side if they expect this side to win again. If parties and voters on the losing side are better able to coordinate, the resulting, total incumbency advantage may be lower or even disappear, facilitating elite renewal.

To assess the interaction between coordination failures and direct mechanisms of incumbency advantage, we use a regression discontinuity design in a multi-party environment, the French local and parliamentary elections. We measure the effects of close electoral victories on the probability of winning and on the composition of the candidate pool in the next election. The elections we study use a two-round plurality voting rule and they often feature a large number of candidates in the first round, making coordination issues particularly important.[1] Elected officials face no term limits, making any systematic incumbency advantage particularly consequential. Our sample includes a total of more than 20,000 races, which enables us to explore the mechanisms underlying the effects on our main outcomes through heterogeneity analyses, while maintaining sufficient statistical precision.

We first document the existence of a large incumbency advantage in French multiparty elections: the victory of a candidate increases their likelihood of winning the next election by 25.1 percentage points. We also identify each candidate's party and political orientation (from far-left to far-right) and measure incumbents' advantage at these two additional levels as well, to account for the possibility that parties on the losing side replace their candidate more often. The party-level and orientation-level incumbency advantage indicate how a candidate's close victory affects their party and orientation's likelihood of winning the next election. The effect of winning the present election on winning the next one is lower but remains substantial at the party and orientation levels: 13.3 and 12.3 percentage points, respectively. Moreover, the incumbency advantage is sizable for candidates of different orientations, and in both local and parliamentary elections.

Second, we estimate the effects of a close victory on the likelihood that the candidate or other candidates of their party participate in the next election, which may directly contribute to the effect on winning. Incumbents are more likely by 32.9 percentage points than their closest challenger to compete again in the next election. The impact is also positive at the party level, but smaller and non-significant.

Third, we estimate the effects of a close victory on the likelihood that other candidates from the same orientation of the incumbent participate in the next election. A close victory decreases the number of competitors from the candidate's orientation by 0.43 on average, which corresponds to

[1] Coordination issues may also be present and favor incumbents in countries with single-round first-past-the-post elections, as long as they sustain a multi-party system.

a 23% decrease compared to the mean at the left of the threshold. The effect on the total number of candidates from the same orientation (including the candidate themselves when they run again) is also negative, although it falls short of statistical significance. Interestingly, the drop in the number of competitors is driven by competitors belonging to political parties more than by independent candidates from the same orientation, suggesting that the lower number of ideologically close competitors faced by the incumbent primarily results from dropout agreements between parties. We conclude that party coordination is more effective on the side of the incumbent. Thus, better coordination reinforces the direct mechanisms giving incumbents an advantage, which have been identified in previous work on two-party systems.

Fourth, using a bounding strategy, we show that incumbents obtain a larger vote share (by 3.0 to 19.8 percentage points) and are more likely to win (by 8.0 to 33.9 percentage points) than their closest challenger, conditional on running again. We also find that incumbents who run again face fewer ideologically close competitors than challengers who run again, which may partly drive the effect on winning. However, beyond candidate and party decisions to compete, incumbency advantage may also be driven by voters rallying the incumbent in the next election. In fact, incumbents may receive more contributions or run better campaigns. We explore these possibilities by measuring effects on campaign expenditures and on the content of two-page candidate manifestos mailed by the state to all registered voters. While incumbents do not raise significantly more money than their closest challenger in the previous election, conditional on running again, we find that their manifestos are more original, where manifesto originality is defined relatively to other candidates from the same party. This suggests that incumbents' communication strategy is more personalized and better-tailored to their voters' preferences. Incumbents may also represent a focal point for voters in the subsequent election. To provide evidence on this mechanism, we use a separate regression discontinuity design and estimate the impact of qualifying for the runoff on the next election's results. Unlike winning the election (and becoming the incumbent), qualifying for the runoff does not generate the advantages coming from holding office, and we show that it does not affect the number of competitors from the same orientation in the next election. However, it does increase candidates' future vote share, conditional on running again. This suggests that candidates who do well in an election, even without being elected to office, become focal points for

voters. Similarly, voters are likely to coordinate on the winner of the past election, contributing to the incumbency advantage that we document.

1.1 Literature review

We build on a vast literature documenting the existence of an electoral advantage for incumbent politicians seeking reelection. Evidence of an incumbency advantage in the U.S. dates back to Erikson (1971). Since Lee (2008), researchers have used regression discontinuity designs to provide rigorous causal evidence on this phenomenon, both at the candidate and the party level (Fowler and Hall 2014). In the U.S., they have found consistent evidence of an incumbency advantage in state (Uppal 2010), city council (Krebs 1998; Trounstine 2011), federal (Butler 2009), and primary elections (Ansolabehere et al. 2007; Olson 2020). A large incumbency advantage also exists in other countries using first-past-the-post elections, including the U.K. (Katz and King 1999; Eggers and Spirling 2017), Australia (Horiuchi and Leigh 2009), and Canada (Kendall and Rekkas 2012). Matland and Studlar (2004) suggest that the incumbency advantage is lower in proportional elections, since the presence of multiple incumbents in the same district dilutes the effect. Positive effects have been found in proportional elections in Denmark (Dahlgaard 2016), Finland (Kotakorpi et al. 2017), France (Gougou 2023), Germany (Hainmueller and Kern 2008; Ade et al. 2014), Ireland (Redmond and Regan 2015), Norway (Fiva and Røhr 2018), Portugal (Lopes da Fonseca 2017), Sweden (Liang 2013), but not in Italy (Golden and Picci 2015) and Japan (Ariga 2015), where, if anything, incumbents tend to be disadvantaged.[2]

The incumbency advantage may first arise because incumbent politicians get an edge from holding office (Fiorina 1989; Krebs 1998). Incumbents can engage in clientelism (Nunez 2018; Frey 2019) and pork barrel spending (Fowler and Hall 2015; Spáč 2020). They tend to get disproportional media coverage (Prior 2006; Schaffner 2006), and may be able to outspend challengers (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014; Holbrook and Weinschenk 2014). Second, the incumbency advantage may arise from systematic differences in the quality of incumbents and challengers. Incumbents may deter high-quality challengers from competing against them (Levitt and Wolfram 1997; Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2008; Ban et al. 2016; Hall and Snyder 2015). Differences in quality

[2]In non-Western countries, the incumbency effect has also often been found to be negative: see Duraisamy et al. (2014) and Karnik et al. (2023) for India, Roh (2017) for South Korea, and De Magalhaes (2015) and Klašnja and Titiunik (2017) for Brazil.

may also emerge if candidates who marginally lost the election are replaced more often in the next election than incumbents who marginally won and the pool of candidates to choose from is of lower quality than those who made it to a close election (Eggers 2017).

We complement this literature by estimating the size of the incumbency advantage in two-round elections and by documenting a new class of mechanisms: more effective party and voter coordination on the winning side than on the losing side. This mechanism is specific to multi-party systems, which are likely to emerge under voting rules such as two-round plurality voting. Furthermore, the fact that two-round elections allow some non-winners to also gain visibility, by qualifying for the runoff, enables us to isolate the role of voter coordination on focal-point candidates from the effect of holding office.

Our analyses build on recent studies investigating how candidates and voters solve coordination issues when the number of potential candidates is larger than two and, therefore, multiple equilibria exist (Duverger 1954; Palfrey 1989; Myerson and Weber 1993; Cox 1997).[3] Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) show that voters tend to coordinate on candidates who finished a close second rather than third in the previous election, and Granzier et al. (2023a) find coordination by both parties and voters on candidates' first-round rankings in two-round elections. However, coordination often remains imperfect. Parties often fail to reach dropout agreements and many voters' choices are driven by expressive motives or by the desire to be on the winning side rather than by strategic considerations (Pons and Tricaud 2018; Granzier et al. 2023a). Negative feedback may also undermine strategic coordination since one's incentive to be strategic drops as strategic voting by others increases (Myatt 2007). Pons and Tricaud (2018) show that imperfect coordination can lead to ideologically close candidates splitting the votes of their base and to suboptimal outcomes such as the defeat of the Condorcet winner. In this paper, we investigate how coordination issues interact with incumbency advantage by exploring whether these issues are more severe on the winning or the losing side. We show that parties and voters use electoral history to identify which candidates to coordinate on and that coordination is more effective on the winning side, consistent with predictions by Reed (1990), Forsythe et al. (1993), and Cox (1997).

[3]While Duverger (1954) argues that incentives for voters to behave strategically are weak in the first round of runoff elections, because similar parties can regroup for the runoff, Cox (1997) points that these incentives remain present. Consistent with this view, we show in Section 5.3 that candidates who do well in the current election become focal points for strategic voters in the first round of the next election.

Finally, our results also contribute to the broader literature studying the properties of two-round plurality rule elections (Bouton 2013; Bordignon et al. 2016; Bouton et al. 2022; Cipullo 2021), a voting system used to elect Members of Parliament or local governments in many countries, including France, the Czech Republic (Senate), Italy (municipalities), Vietnam, Mali, Uzbekistan, and to elect the head of state in nearly 90 countries.

2 Institutional Setting and Data

2.1 Setting

Our sample includes both parliamentary and local elections.[4]

Parliamentary elections The National Assembly is the lower house of the French Parliament. In addition to holding the legislative power, it controls the government and can overthrow it. It is currently composed of 577 representatives elected through two-round plurality elections in single-member districts. To be elected in the first round, a candidate needs to obtain the absolute majority of the votes cast in their district, and these votes need to account for at least one quarter of all registered voters. If no candidate wins in the first round, the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round and any other candidate who obtained the votes of at least 12.5% of the registered voters qualify for the second round. The runoff takes place among all qualified candidates who choose to stay in the race instead of dropping out. The candidate who receives a plurality of votes gets elected.

This two-round plurality system has been in place since 1958. The number of representatives has increased slightly over time, and the first round vote share required to qualify for the second round changed from 5% of the expressed votes in 1958 to 10% of the registered voters in 1966 and to the current threshold of 12.5% of the registered voters in 1975.

Local elections France is divided into 101 départements, which have responsibilities over education, transportation, and social assistance, among other matters. In each département, a departmental council holds the legislative power and elects a president, who holds the executive power.

[4] We do not include municipal elections, which use a different voting rule and a list format, instead of single-member constituencies.

Members of the departmental council are chosen by small constituencies, the cantons. During our sample period, each canton elected one council member for a six-year mandate. Every three years, half of the cantons voted to renew their representatives.[5]

Local elections use a two-round plurality voting rule, similarly as the parliamentary elections. The threshold to qualify for the second round was 10% of the registered voters until 2010, when it was raised to 12.5%.

Party system Over the sample period, French politics have been dominated by the following seven main parties, ordered from left to right on the ideological scale: Front de Gauche (FDG), Verts (VEC), Parti Socialiste (SOC), Parti radical de gauche (RadGauche), Mouvement Démocrate (MODEM), Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), and Front National (FN).[6] These parties were long organized into two coalitions (Bornschier and Lachat 2009). The left coalition was dominated by SOC and the right coalition by UMP. These two parties have generally obtained the most votes and seats and they have therefore been the cornerstones of coalitions also involving the MODEM, on the right, and FDG, VEC, and RadGauche, on the left. Electoral alliances can lead to dropout agreements (where one party agrees not to field any candidate) before the first round and between the first and second rounds, as well as endorsement of other parties' candidates. After the election, allied parties often build coalitions at the National Assembly and in departmental councils, and they govern together. FN, on the far-right, has not participated in alliances with parties on the left or on the right, except for a few local elections.

Beyond the seven main parties, elections often feature candidates affiliated with smaller issue-specific parties. Candidates may also run as independents, without the endorsement of any national party. Independent candidates account for 30% of all candidates in our sample and for 19% of the top-two contenders in the final round of elections.

2.2 Electoral data

We use data for all parliamentary elections between 1958 and 2017, except for the 1986 elections, which used a proportional system. We also use data for all local elections between 1979 and 2011.

[5] Since the 2015 election, local elections take place every six years in the entire country and they elect tickets composed of a male and a female candidate. Cantons were all redistricted ahead of the 2015 election, hence this election is excluded from our analysis.

[6] We provide more information on each party in Appendix D.2.

Electoral results were obtained from Granzier et al. (2023a).[7] For each electoral district and election year, we have data on the number of candidates, the number of registered voters and expressed votes, and the vote shares obtained by each candidate in both electoral rounds as well as their political label. Our analysis requires linking races over time, from one election to the next. Therefore, we restrict the sample to districts that were not affected by redistricting and whose borders remained identical between two consecutive elections. Our main sample includes observations from twelve parliamentary elections and ten local elections.[8]

In each district, we match candidates, parties, and orientations across elections. First, we use fuzzy string matching on candidate names to identify candidates present both in election t and election $t+1$, and we link candidates at t to their electoral outcomes at $t+1$. Second, we use the political labels attributed to candidates by the Ministry of the Interior to identify candidates affiliated with one of the seven main parties.[9] We track parties' election-specific names and their genealogy over time based primarily on Knapp (2004). In each district, we aggregate candidate outcomes at the party level and link candidates at t to their party-level outcomes at $t+1$.[10] Third, we allocate candidates to six political orientations (far-left, left, center, right, far-right, and non-classified). This is an important classification, since candidates who are not affiliated with any of the seven main parties might nonetheless have a clear political orientation, indicated by labels such as "diverse left" or "diverse right." We thus aggregate candidate outcomes at the orientation level, and link candidates at t to their orientation-level outcomes at $t+1$.[11]

[7] They are made publicly available by the French Ministry of the Interior for elections held after 1988, and they were digitized by Granzier et al. (2023b) for elections prior to 1988.

[8] Specifically, we focus on parliamentary elections in 1958, 1962, 1967, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012, and local elections in 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2008. Observations from the 2017 parliamentary election and the 2011 local election, which are the last available elections, are only used to construct next-election outcomes for, respectively, the 2012 parliamentary election and either the 2004 or the 2008 local election, depending on the cantons. Furthermore, we do not link districts in 1988 to a previous election or districts in 1981 to a future election, since the 1986 election, which took place in between, followed a different (proportional) electoral rule. Observations from 1981 are still linked to the 1978 election and used to construct next-election outcomes for that year. Appendix Tables D.1 and D.2 list all elections in the sample and the elections they are matched with to construct next-election outcomes.

[9] The political labels are based on candidates' self-reported political affiliation, party endorsement, past candidacies, and public declarations, among other indicators.

[10] In the vast majority of races in our sample, there is only one candidate per party. Only 2% of the top-two contenders in the final round of a race are linked to several candidates from the same party at t+1.

[11] For more details on the mapping between candidate labels on the one hand and parties and orientations on the other, see Appendix D.2. The mapping with orientations builds on Granzier et al. (2023a). The key outcomes at the candidate, party, and orientation levels are defined in Appendix D.6.

2.3 Complementary data

Campaign expenditures We complement our dataset with the total amount of contributions received by each candidate (from individual donations, party contributions, or personal contributions) and their total expenditures, for all elections since 1992. These data come from the French National Commission on Campaign Accounts and Political Financing (CNCCFP). They were collected and digitized by Fauvelle-Aymar and François (2005), Foucault and François (2005), and Granzier et al. (2023a).

Candidate manifestos In France, individual candidates may issue a two-page electoral manifesto (*"profession de foi"*), distinct from their party's manifesto. The state mails the manifestos of all candidates in a given district to all registered voters of this district a few days before the election. We provide additional details on these documents in Appendix D.4 and show an example in Appendix Figure D.1.

Our campaign manifesto data cover all parliamentary elections from 1962 to 1997 and the 2017 parliamentary elections. Candidate manifestos were collected and digitized by the CEVIPOF's Archelec project (Gaultier-Voituriez 2016) and Le Pennec (2024b) for the 1962 to 1993 elections and by Cagé et al. (2024) for the 1997 election. The 2017 election manifestos were made available online by the Ministry of the Interior and scraped by Regards Citoyens (https://www.regardscitoyens.org/). We obtained them from Le Pennec (2024b).

We use an unsupervised approach to construct a measure of manifesto originality with respect to manifestos issued by other candidates from the same party, for candidates affiliated with one of the seven parties. Specifically, we calculate each manifesto's average pairwise similarity to all other manifestos issued in the same election year by candidates from the same party, based on the words appearing in their manifestos. The similarity between any two manifestos is computed in six different ways.[12] The six measures of mean similarity to other manifestos from the same party are then standardized by election year. We define an originality index equal to the average of these six standardized measures. This index reflects the politician's effort and ability to write a personalized

[12]We define similarity as the cosine similarity between vectors of frequencies or weighted frequencies over unigrams (single words) or bigrams (two-word expressions), or using a Latent Semantic Indexing approach as in Bertrand et al. (2021). For more details, see Appendix D.5.

campaign message, instead of using a template common to other candidates endorsed by the same party.

In addition to the originality index, we measure the share of words in a manifesto that are first person's personal pronouns (e.g., *"je"*) and the share of words that are past participles (e.g., *"fait"*, *"été"*). These outcomes also reflect the personalization of a candidate's campaign communication, as they capture the candidate's propensity to refer to their own actions and past achievements in their manifesto.

3 Empirical Strategy

3.1 Regression discontinuity design

We estimate the causal impact of winning on party coordination and subsequent electoral success by exploiting close races.

After excluding races that cannot be linked to a subsequent election due to redistricting as well as races where the winner ran uncontested, our sample for the candidate-level analysis includes a total of 20,755 races: 5,757 races from parliamentary elections and 14,998 races from local elections.[13] Our sample for the party-level analysis further excludes candidates who are not affiliated with any of the seven main party organizations and races in which the top-two contenders are from the same party. It includes 19,434 races. Races in which the top-two contenders are from the same party only account for 0.5 percent of all races. In general, *all* candidates are from distinct parties. Our orientation-level sample excludes candidates who cannot be classified on the left-right scale and races in which the top-two contenders are from the same orientation. It includes 18,666 races.

Summary statistics for races included in each sample are displayed in Appendix Table D.3. First-round turnout is about 68% on average, in all samples, with an average number of six competing candidates. A runoff is held in 71% of races and the winning margin is 21 percentage points on average. Thanks to the large number of races in our data, many of them are close: the vote share difference between the winner and the closest contender is lower than 5 percentage points in 3,686 races in the main sample.

[13] See Appendix Tables D.1 and D.2 for more details.

We use two observations per race, corresponding to the winner and the runner-up. We define our running variable $Marg$ based on the difference between the vote shares obtained by these two candidates in the final round of the election (the first round, if the election was won in the first round, and the second round otherwise). It is positive and equal to the difference between the vote shares of the winner and the runner-up, for the winner, and negative and equal to the difference between the vote shares of the runner-up and the winner, for the runner-up. The treatment variable T is a dummy equal to one if the candidate won the election ($Marg > 0$) and 0 otherwise ($Marg < 0$).[14] We use a sharp regression discontinuity design and estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{i,t+1} = \alpha + \tau T_{i,t} + \beta f(Marg_{i,t}) + \gamma T_{i,t} * f(Marg_{i,t}) + \epsilon_{i,t+1}, \quad (1)$$

where $Y_{i,t+1}$ is the outcome of interest for candidate i (alternatively, for the party or the orientation of candidate i) in election $t+1$. Our baseline specification is non-parametric, following Imbens and Lemieux (2008) and Calonico et al. (2014), and we estimate it using the rdrobust Stata package. The specification amounts to estimating two local linear regressions, one to the left and the other to the right of the cutoff.[15] Our coefficient of interest, τ, corresponds to the difference between the intercepts of the two regressions, evaluated at $Marg = 0$. It estimates the causal impact of winning the election t.[16]

We estimate equation 1 for a wide range of outcomes, including whether the candidate runs again, the number of candidates from the same orientation in the next election, whether the candidate wins the next election, and whether their party or orientation wins the next election. The last two outcomes are defined as dummies equal to one if any candidate (whether the candidate themselves or another candidate) from the candidate's party (resp. orientation) wins the next election.[17] We use an identical bandwidth for all outcomes, equal to 5 percentage points, as in Colonnelli et al. (2020). Indeed, the optimal bandwidths selected by the MSERD procedure from Calonico

[14] There are nine races in our sample in which the top-two contenders obtain the exact same number of votes, in which case the older candidate is designated as winner. We exclude these races from the sample.

[15] We show the robustness of our main results to fitting local quadratic regressions instead of linear ones in Appendix Table C.1.

[16] More precisely, fitting equation 1 delivers an estimate of the average causal effect of winning at $Marg = 0$. That is, $\mathbb{E}\left[Y_{i,t+1}(1) - Y_{i,t+1}(0) | Marg = 0\right]$ where $(Y_{i,t+1}(1), Y_{i,t+1}(0))$ denotes the pair of potential outcomes underlying $Y_{i,t+1}$ if candidate i wins or looses the election at time t. As shown in Imbens and Lemieux (2008), this estimand is identified if the conditional means or the conditional distributions of the potential outcomes are continuous in the running variable.

[17] The running and treatment variables are defined at the candidate level for all outcomes, including the candidate's party or orientation victory at the next election.

et al. (2019) and by the method from Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) yield surprisingly large values in our setting (e.g., the MSERD method yields a bandwidth of 13.7pp for the probability of winning the next election). These outcome-specific optimal bandwidths also vary widely across the different outcomes. Using a common bandwidth facilitates the comparison of point estimates across outcomes and subsamples and the assessment of the underlying mechanisms. In Appendix Figure C.1, we replicate our main results for a wide range of bandwidth values from 1 to 20pp, including the bandwidths from Calonico et al. (2019) and Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012). In all specifications, standard errors are clustered at the district level.

3.2 Identification assumption

We provide standard tests to assess the validity of our RDD.

A usual concern is that candidates of a specific type may manage to systematically sort immediately to the right of the victory cutoff. Such manipulation is unlikely, since it would require candidates to be able to predict the outcome of the race with great accuracy, while several unpredictable events, including weather conditions, make electoral outcomes uncertain. To rule out the presence of sorting empirically, we implement the density test from Cattaneo et al. (2018). In our setting, this test is satisfied by construction at the candidate level since our sample includes the exact same set of races on both sides of the threshold and, in each race, the winning and losing candidates are equally distant from the cutoff. The samples we use for analyses at the party and orientation levels include a few races with only one candidate, due to the exclusion of candidates who do not belong to one of the seven main parties and of candidates who cannot be classified on the left-right scale, respectively, but the tests remain relatively uninformative. We show the results of the density tests in Appendix Figure B.1. As expected, the null hypothesis of no sorting at the threshold cannot be rejected at standard levels of significance, for any of our levels of analysis (candidate, party or orientation).

Next, we conduct a general test of imbalance by checking whether treatment status predicted based on covariates jumps at the threshold, following Anagol and Fujiwara (2016). We consider variables whose distribution at the cutoff is not mechanically symmetric: a set of six dummies indicating the candidate's orientation; the number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation in the current election, at t; a dummy indicating if the candidate is affiliated with a party or

running as independent;[18] a dummy indicating if the candidate is a woman; dummies indicating if the candidate, their party and their orientation ran in the previous election, at $t-1$; dummies indicating if they, their party and their orientation won at $t-1$; their first round vote share, the vote share of their party, and that of their orientation at $t-1$ (set equal to 0 if they, their party, and their orientation did not run, respectively); and the number of other candidates from the same orientation at $t-1$.[19] Using our sample of top-two contenders as described above, we regress each candidate's actual treatment status T on these variables and generate their predicted treatment assignment based on the regression's coefficients.[20] We then test whether predicted values jump at the victory cutoff.

Figure 1 shows the results. Each dot represents the probability of being treated within a given bin of the running variable – i.e., the vote share difference between the first two candidates. Winning candidates are located to the right of the threshold, and losing ones to the left. A quadratic fit on each side of the cutoff is provided as a visual assistance. Figure 1a does not reveal any discontinuity when using our sample for the candidate-level analysis. Figures 1b and 1c do not show any discontinuity in the party-level or the orientation-level sample either. Table 1 shows the corresponding point estimates: coefficients for the three levels of analysis are small and non-significant. As shown in Appendix Figure C.2, this is true for a large range of bandwidth values, including those chosen optimally using the MSERD and IK procedures.

We finally test whether there is a discontinuity in any of the individual variables used to predict treatment. Appendix Figure B.2 shows that there is no discontinuity in the probability that the candidate (or the candidate's party or orientation) won or ran in election $t-1$, nor in the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the current and in the previous election. Appendix Table B.1 shows results for all other variables, in the candidate-level sample. All estimates are

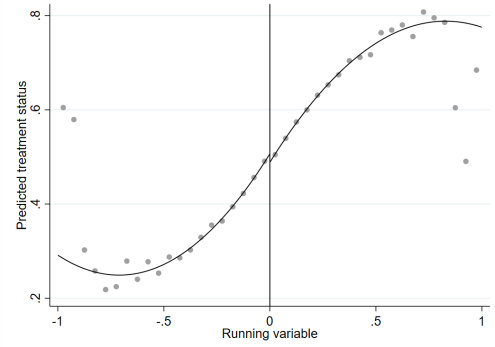
[18] Independent candidates are those whose political label assigned by the Ministry of the Interior does not correspond to a party organization. The classification of labels between parties and non-parties was performed by Granzier et al. (2023a). Note that candidates affiliated with a party are never considered independent, including if this party is not one of the seven main parties that we focus on.

[19] Other variables such as the number of registered voters, the total number of candidates, voter turnout, or the candidate's vote share at the decisive stage are smooth at the threshold, by construction, since they take the same value for the observations corresponding to the incumbent and to the runner-up of a given race, so we do not take them into account in this test.

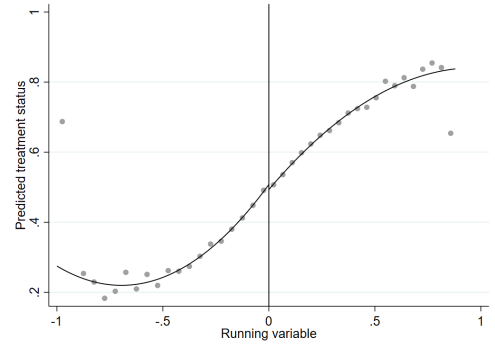
[20] Outcomes at t-1 are set to missing in districts that have been redistricted since the previous election, for all observations in the 1988 parliamentary election (which was preceded by an election with a different electoral rule), and for observations in the 1958 parliamentary election and the 1979 local election (which are the earliest elections in our sample). To avoid dropping observations, for each regressor, we include a dummy equal to one when the variable is missing and we replace missing values by 0. Each covariate is described in more detail in Appendix D.7.

Figure 1: General balance test

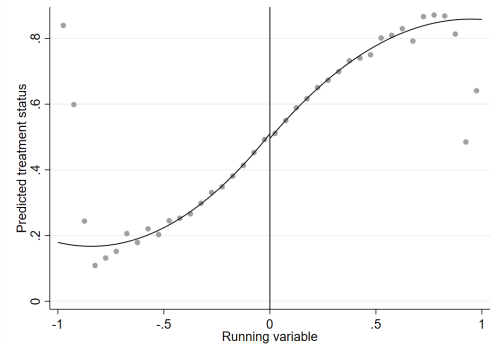
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



(c) Orientation level



Notes: Dots represent the local averages of the predicted treatment status (vertical axis). Averages are calculated within equally-spaced bins of the running variable (horizontal axis). The running variable (the vote share difference between the first two candidates) is measured as percentage points, and each bin is five-percentage-points wide. Continuous lines are a quadratic fit. In Figure 1b, we use our party-level sample. In Figure 1c, we use our orientation-level sample.

Table 1: General balance test

	Predicted treatment status		
	(1) Cand.	(2) Party	(3) Orient.
Treatment effect	-0.003	0.006	0.001
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Robust p-value	0.787	0.411	0.555
Observations	7372	5850	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.491	0.491	0.493

Notes: Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the district level. We compute statistical significance based on the robust p-value and indicate significance at 1, 5, and 10% with ***, **, and *, respectively. The unit of observation is the candidate. In column 2, we use our party-level sample. In column 3, we use our orientation-level sample. The outcome is the value of the treatment predicted by candidate-level (column 1), party-level (column 2), and orientation-level (column 3) baseline variables listed in the text. The treatment variable is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate wins the election. We use local polynomial regressions: we fit separate polynomials of order 1 on each side of the threshold, using a bandwidth of 5 percentage points. The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for the losing candidate at the threshold.

small and non-significant, except for the candidate's orientation: columns 1 through 5 of Panel a suggest that close winners are more often from the center and the right. Our main results are virtually identical when controlling for candidate orientation fixed effects, as shown in Appendix Table C.2.[21]

4 Main Results

4.1 Impact on the likelihood of winning the next election

We first test for the existence of an incumbency advantage in French parliamentary and local elections by measuring the impact of a close victory on the odds of winning the following election. We conduct this analysis at the candidate, party, and orientation levels. The outcome is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate (or the candidate's party or orientation) wins the next election, and 0 if

[21] While all these tests provide reassuring evidence that our results are internally valid, we must keep in mind that, by design, our RDD estimates the causal impact of closely winning the election. Therefore, our findings may only apply to competitive races that are won by a small margin, not races won in a landslide. Summary statistics for the sample of races included within the 5-percentage-point bandwidth are provided in Appendix Table D.4. These races tend to include more candidates and to take place in larger constituencies than the average race (see Appendix Table D.3).

they run and lose or if they do not run. Thus, this outcome is defined whether the candidate (or their party or orientation) is present in the next election or not.[22]

The effects at the candidate, party, and orientation levels are nested within each other. Indeed, unsuccessful candidates may be replaced by another candidate from the same party in the next election. Candidates who were replaced do not have any chance of winning, but their party may win if they run with another candidate. Similarly, a party might be less inclined to run following a defeat, jeopardizing its potential future victory. However, another party or an independent candidate from the same orientation may run, thereby providing the orientation with an opportunity to win. If defeated candidates are more likely to be replaced in the next election, we should expect the incumbency advantage to be larger at the candidate level than at the party and orientation levels.

Figure 2a plots the likelihood that the first and second candidates in the current election win the next election against the running variable. We observe a marked discontinuity at the cutoff: winning the current election dramatically increases a candidate's odds of winning the next one. Figures 2b and 2c show that winning the current election also increases the odds that *any* candidate (either the same candidate or another one) from the same party and the same orientation, respectively, wins the next election.

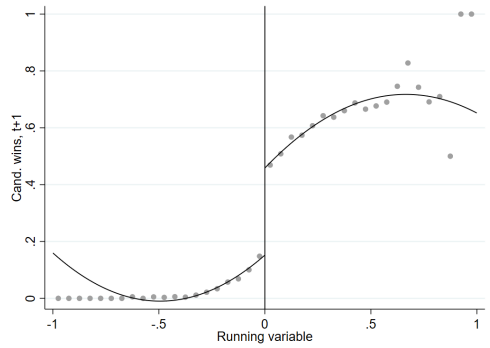
Table 2 complements the graphical analysis with formal estimates of the effects. On average, the victory of a candidate increases their likelihood of winning the next election by 25.1 percentage points (column 1), an effect that is statistically significant at the 1% level and represents a 70% increase relative to the average likelihood of winning of close contenders at the left of the threshold. The effect is halved at the party and orientation levels – 13.3 and 12.3 percentage points, respectively (columns 2 and 3) – but the point estimates still represent 50% and 34% increases compared to the average chance of victory of the parties and orientations of losing candidates at the left of the threshold.

Appendix Table C.1 checks the robustness of our results to using bandwidths chosen based on the MSERD procedure from Calonico et al. (2019) and the method from Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012); tighter and larger bandwidths of 2.5 and 10 percentage points; and a quadratic specification instead of a linear one. Point estimates at the candidate level are virtually unchanged across all specifications and always remain significant at the 1% level (Panel a). Results at the party and ori-

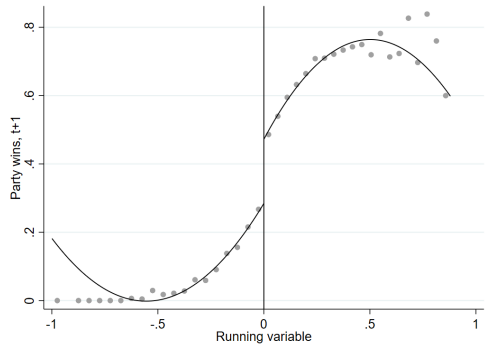
[22] We provide more details on the definition of this outcome and all others in Appendix D.6.

Figure 2: Impact of winning on winning the next election

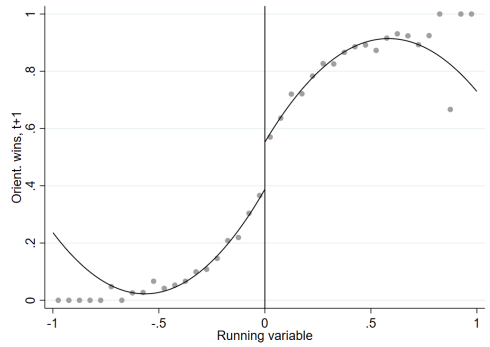
(a) Candidate wins the next election



(b) Party wins the next election



(c) Orientation wins the next election



Notes: Dots represent the local averages of the outcome: a dummy equal to one if the candidate (or the candidate's party or orientation) wins the next election (vertical axis). Averages are calculated within equally-spaced bins of the running variable (horizontal axis). The running variable (the vote share difference between the first two candidates) is measured as percentage points, and each bin is five-percentage-points wide. Continuous lines are a quadratic fit. In Figure 2b, we use our party-level sample. In Figure 2c, we use our orientation-level sample.

entation levels are also similar across specifications, but point estimates are either non-significant or significant only at the 10% level when using a quadratic specification or a smaller bandwidth (Panels b and c, columns 3 and 5). Appendix Figure C.1 further shows that our results are robust to a large range of bandwidth values, with smaller and noisier estimates for very narrow bandwidths. Optimal bandwidths are generally larger and yield more precise estimates than our baseline five-percentage-point bandwidth.

Having established the existence of an incumbency advantage at the individual, party, and orientation levels, we now compare the magnitude of the effect across different settings. Appendix Table A.1 shows the heterogeneity results at the candidate level.[23] The treatment effect on the odds

[23] Appendix Table A.2 shows heterogeneity results using the likelihood of running again as outcome.

Table 2: Impact of winning on winning the next election

	Cand. wins, t+1	Party wins, t+1	Orient. wins, t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment effect	0.251***	0.133**	0.123**
	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.011	0.016
Observations	7372	5850	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.148	0.267	0.366

Notes: Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the district level. We compute statistical significance based on the robust p-value and indicate significance at 1, 5, and 10% with ***, **, and *, respectively. The unit of observation is the candidate. In column 2, we use our party-level sample. In column 3, we use our orientation-level sample. The outcome is a dummy equal to one if the candidate (column 1), the candidate's party (column 2), or the candidate's orientation (column 3) wins the next election. The treatment variable is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate wins the current election. We use local polynomial regressions: we fit separate polynomials of order 1 on each side of the threshold, using a fixed bandwidth of 5 percentage points. The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for the losing candidate at the threshold.

of winning the next election is sizable in different types of elections and for candidates of different orientations and party formations. However, the effect is twice as large in local elections as in parliamentary elections (columns 1 and 2), suggesting that the incumbency advantage is stronger in elections which are less salient or where the identity (valence) of the candidate is more relevant than their party affiliation (ideology). The size of the effect is comparable for men and women (columns 3 and 4), although the point estimate is not significant at conventional levels for female candidates – presumably because very few women get elected over our sample period, resulting in a small sample size. The effect is also comparable for left and far-left candidates, on the one hand, and candidates of other orientations, on the other hand (columns 5 and 6). It is slightly larger for candidates running for an opposition party than for candidates belonging to a party of the ruling majority (columns 7 and 8).[24] Finally, the incumbency advantage is slightly larger for candidates of the centrist MODEM party (column 9), but it remains sizable and significant for FDG, SOC, and UMP (columns 9 through 12).[25] Finally, we cut the sample in two halves, and we find comparable effects before and after 1994 (columns 13 and 14). Despite significant changes such as

[24]The ruling majority refers to the party or the coalition of parties that support the ruling national government at the time of the $t+1$ election.

[25]The point estimate for the left-wing party FDG falls short of statistical significance due to a smaller sample size (column 9). We exclude the Green party, VEC, and FN from this party-specific analysis as too few of their candidates are close to the threshold.

the introduction of campaign finance regulations and the emergence of new types of media, the incumbency advantage has remained constant.

The positive effect of winning on winning the next election may stem from impacts on the likelihood that the candidate and their competitors run in the following election, and from an increased probability of winning the election, conditional on rerunning. We build on our RDD framework to disentangle and quantify the importance of each of these two types of channels.

4.2 Impact on candidate entry in the next election

Figures 3a and 3b plot the likelihood of running in the next election against the running variable at the candidate level and at the party level, respectively. In both cases, we observe a large upward jump at the threshold, indicating that the incumbent candidate and party are more likely to run again than the runner-up from the previous election. Additionally, Figures 3c and 3d plot the number of candidates from the same orientation running in the next election, respectively excluding and including the candidate themselves. One may expect a negative effect on the number of competitors from the same orientation if incumbents become focal points or if they are better able to deter ideologically-close challengers from entering the race, as a result of the political power that comes with being in office. Alternatively, a positive effect could emerge if candidates and parties on the losing side decide to join forces in order to reverse the result of the previous election. The quadratic polynomial fit in Figure 3c indicates a marked downward jump at the cutoff, in line with the former hypothesis.

In accordance with the graphical evidence, column 1 in Table 3 shows that a candidate's victory increases their odds of running again in the next election by 32.9 percentage points (84% of the mean at the left of the threshold), which is significant at the 1% level. The impact is also positive, but non-significant, at the party level, with a point estimate of 4.6 percentage points. The weaker effect at the party level compared to the candidate level supports our explanation for why the unconditional effect of winning at time t on winning at time $t+1$ is more pronounced at the candidate level (Table 2, columns 1 and 2). This is primarily due to defeated candidates being less likely to rerun compared to their defeated party. Finally, a close victory decreases the number of competitors from the candidate's orientation by 0.43 (23%), compared to a close defeat, which is also significant

at the 1% level.[26] The effect on the number of candidates from other orientations is mechanically of the exact same magnitude and opposite sign since our RDD compares the number of candidates from the winner's orientation to that of the loser's orientation, while keeping the number of candidates from any other orientation constant. A possible concern with focusing on the number of competitors from the same orientation is that, if parties always replace a non-running candidate, this outcome could mechanically jump up to the left of the cutoff, since losing candidates are more likely not to run again. This would thus lead to overestimating the effect. Figure 3d and column 4 of Table 3 report the effect on the total number of competitors from the same orientation, including the candidate. In this case, on the contrary, the effect is likely to be underestimated. Since a winning candidate is more likely to re-run, the total number of candidates from the same orientation mechanically increases to the right of the cutoff. It is reassuring that this underestimated coefficient remains negative, even though it falls short of statistical significance. These results are robust to changes in the choice of bandwidth or to using a quadratic specification, as shown in Appendix Table C.3. In particular, the effect of winning the current election on the total number of candidates from the same orientation in the next election is negative and significant at the 1% and 5% level, respectively, when using either the MSERD or IK optimal bandwidths (Panel d of Appendix Table C.3, columns 1 and 2).

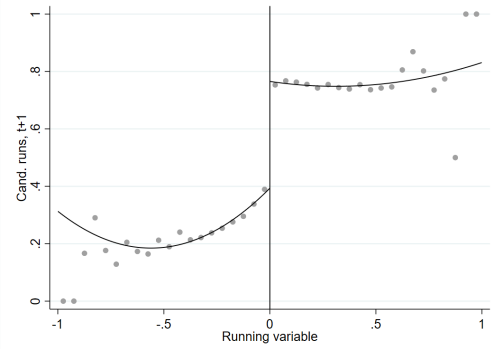
In sum, the unconditional impact of winning today on winning again tomorrow is partly driven both by the increased probability that the winner runs again and the lower number of competitors from the same political orientation. The latter effect is concentrated among competitors who are very close ideologically: winning the current election has a small and non-significant effect on the number of candidates from neighboring orientations (Appendix Table A.3). For instance, the victory of a left-wing candidate reduces the number of left-wing competitors in the next election without affecting the number of competitors from the center and the far-left.

We now turn to study whether the effect on re-running suffices to explain the effect on winning or whether winning the present election also increases the likelihood of winning the next one, conditional on running.

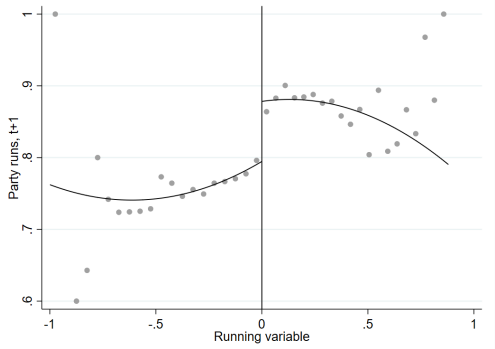
[26] We focus on the number of candidates from the candidate's orientation rather than the candidate's party. Indeed, given that French parliamentary and local elections are held in single-member districts, it is extremely rare for several candidates of the same party to run in the same constituency: over our sample period, only 6.8% of all races had more than one candidate per party (among our seven main parties). For this reason, we do not discuss issues relevant to multi-member districts on the optimal number of candidates that a party should run, as in Reed (1990) for instance.

Figure 3: Impact of winning on candidate entry in the next election

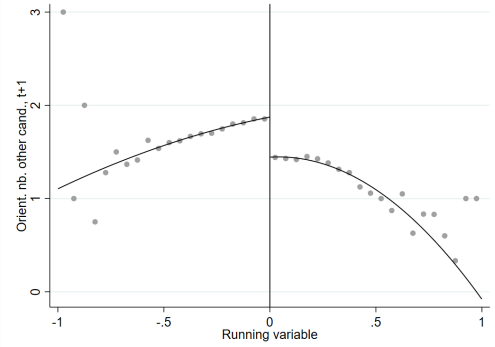
(a) Candidate runs in next election



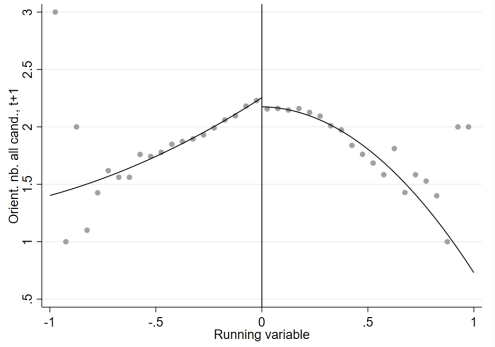
(b) Party runs in next election



(c) Number of other candidates from the same orientation in next election



(d) Total number of candidates from the same orientation in next election



Notes: In Figure 3b, we use our party-level sample. In Figures 3c and 3d, we use our orientation-level sample. Other notes as in Figure 2.

Table 3: Impact of winning on candidate entry in the next election

	Cand. runs, t+1	Party runs, t+1	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1	Orient. nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment effect	0.329***	0.046	-0.426***	-0.129
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.066)	(0.062)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.386	0.000	0.166
Observations	7372	5850	6575	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.390	0.796	1.854	2.230

Notes: The outcome is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate runs (column 1), a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate's party runs (column 2), and the number of other candidates from the same orientation (column 3) or the total number of candidates from the same orientation (column 4) in the next election. In column 2, we use our party-level sample. In columns 3 and 4, we use our orientation-level sample. Other notes as in Table 2.

4.3 Impact on the likelihood of winning conditional on running

While the RDD ensures that close winners and losers are, on average, similar, there is no guarantee that winners and losers who choose to run again in the next election are similar as well (see for instance Eggers (2017)). The possibility of differential selection on the two sides of the threshold makes measuring the effects on winning conditional on running more difficult. Suppose for instance that all winners run again but only high-quality losers do so. Then, using our RDD on the subsample of candidates present in the next election would likely underestimate the impact of winning conditional on re-running.

We address this selection issue with an approach borrowed from Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) and Granzier et al. (2023a), and detailed in Appendix E. Intuitively, the overall effect of winning an election on winning the next includes two components. First, candidates who win an election are more likely to run in the next election, as shown in Section 4.2. In and of itself, that increased likelihood of running again will increase their likelihood of winning again. To determine by how much, the effect on running again should be scaled by the unobserved likelihood of winning the next election of candidates who lost the present election and chose not to run in the next one but who would have run again had they won the present election. Second, all candidates who won the present election and run again benefit from an advantage coming from the fact that they won and hold office: the effect of winning on winning again conditional on re-running, which is the

effect we want to estimate now. Based on that decomposition, that second component (the effect of winning an election on winning the next one, conditional on re-running) can be written as a function of the following terms. It depends on the effect of winning on re-running as well as the unconditional effect of winning on winning again, which can both be measured in the data. It also depends on the likelihood that candidates who lose the present election and, as a result, do not re-run in the next one, would have won the next election, had they decided to re-run. We refer to those candidates as "compliers."[27] This last term is not observable and our approach thus requires making an assumption about its value.

Assuming that this term is equal to 0, that is, that compliers would have had no chance of winning the following election, had they run, amounts to assuming that the effect on the unconditional likelihood of winning reported in Section 4.1 is entirely driven by the effect on winning conditional on running. Therefore, this assumption provides an upper bound on the effect on winning, conditional on running. Conversely, to obtain a reasonably conservative lower bound, we assume that, had they run, compliers who decided not to run in the next election as a result of losing the present one would have had the same probability of winning as the close winners who did run. This probability is equal to 58.3 percent.

We use the same method to derive bounds for the effect of a current victory on the vote share received in the first round of the following election, conditional on the candidate running again. The counterfactual is set again to zero when deriving the upper bound, and to the estimated outcome for close winners participating in the next election, namely 37.9 percent, when deriving the lower bound. We also estimate the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation conditional on the incumbent being present. Unlike winning the next election, which is always equal to zero when the candidate does not run again, the number of competitors from the same orientation may take any value, whether the candidate runs again or not. Furthermore, winning the current election may affect ideologically close candidates' decision to run in the next election, even if the winning candidate does not run again themselves. We adapt the bounds formula to take this into account, as shown in Appendix E. Once again, we need to make assumptions on the expected number of competitors from the same orientation that would have run against a complier who did not run, if that candidate had decided to run. To compute the least conservative

[27] Technical details and the exact formula we use to calculate bounds are provided in Appendix E.

lower bound (i.e., the most negative bound) we assume that this quantity is equal to the number of candidates from the same orientation as any losing candidate who does not run again in the future: 2.3. To compute the more conservative upper bound, we assume that one competitor would have dropped out of the race if the complier had decided to run again, so the number of candidates from the same orientation would have been 1.3.

To evaluate the significance of these bounds, we compute their empirical standard errors based on 10,000 bootstrap iterations obtained by sampling from our dataset with replacement. We complement the analysis by replicating the exercise at the party level: we measure bounds on the effects of a victory on the vote share of the candidate's party and on the number of other candidates from the same political orientation (that are not affiliated with the same party) in the next election, conditional on any candidate from the same party running again.

Table 4 displays the main results of this analysis at the individual candidate level. In column 1, we see that conditional on re-running, the victory of a candidate increases their likelihood of winning the next election by 8.0 to 33.9 percentage points, corresponding to 21 to 89 percent of the mean value for close contenders on the left side of the cutoff. These upper and lower bounds are both statistically significant at the 1% level.[28] Moreover, consistent with the conditional effect on winning, column 2 indicates a sizable treatment impact on the subsequent first-round vote share conditional on re-running: 3.0 to 19.9 percentage points.[29] Again, both bounds are statistically significant at the 1% level. Winning an election also leads to a reduction in the number of other candidates from the same orientation: conditional on the incumbent running again, the number of ideologically close competitors decreases by 0.116 to 0.545 (column 3). The conservative upper bound is significant at the 10% level and corresponds to a 9% decrease relative to the mean number of other candidates from the same orientation at the left of the threshold. This result indicates that incumbents who run again face fewer ideologically-close opponents than challengers who run again.

[28] We are confident that the positive value of our lower bound is not due to an unrealistically low assumption on the value of the unobserved probability of winning again among losing compliers, had they run again. Indeed, for the effect of winning conditional on running again to be equal to zero or less, this unobserved probability would have to be larger than 76.3% (see Appendix E for details), which is much larger than our current assumption of 58.3%.

[29] The effects on unconditional vote shares at the candidate and party level are shown in Appendix Figures A.1a and A.1b, respectively.

Table 4: Bounds on the impact of winning on electoral success and candidate entry in the next election, conditional on running

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. vote share, t+1	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Upper bound	0.339***	0.199***	-0.116*
	(0.033)	(0.011)	(0.062)
Lower bound	0.080***	0.030***	-0.545***
	(0.023)	(0.004)	(0.068)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	0.381	0.310	1.292

Notes: Bootstrapped standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the district level and we indicate significance at 1, 5, and 10% with ***, **, and *, respectively. The unit of observation is the candidate. The outcome is a dummy equal to one if the candidate wins (column 1), the candidate's vote share in the first round in the next election (column 2), and the number of other candidates from the same orientation (column 3). The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for the losing candidate at the threshold, conditional on the candidate running in the next election. Other notes as in Table 2, column 1.

Appendix Table A.4 corroborates these patterns at the party level. At this level of analysis, the ranges of possible values for the effects of a victory are narrower, due to lower effects on running: between 12.8 and 15.6 percentage points for the probability of winning again (column 1); and between 5.1 and 6.9 percentage points for the impact on the party's vote share in the first round of the next election, conditional on the party running again (column 2). Both the lower and upper bounds for the conditional effect on the number of candidates from the same orientation are negative, although the upper bound falls short of statistical significance (column 3).

Collectively, these results highlight the important contribution of the effect of winning, conditional on re-running, to the incumbency advantage in French parliamentary and local elections. Conditional on running again, the incumbent is more likely to win, obtains a higher vote share, and faces fewer candidates from their own orientation.

What fraction of the overall effect of winning can be explained by better coordination on the incumbent side, i.e., by the reduced number of competitors from the same orientation? As we discuss at greater length in Appendix E, the answer depends on the probability of running again; the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election, conditional on running again, which we just measured; and the effect of reducing the number of competitors from the same orientation on the probability of winning. We cannot credibly estimate the latter term as we do not have exogenous variation in the number of candidates from the same

orientation who enter the race. Instead, we borrow an estimate from the existing literature: Pons and Tricaud (2018) show that the presence of a third candidate in the runoff of a two-round race reduces the probability that the ideologically-closest candidate wins by 19.2 percentage points, using data from a similar set of elections. Using this estimate as proxy for the effect of facing one less opponent from the same orientation in the first round, we conclude that the effect of winning on the future number of competitors from the same orientation explains between 7 and 31% of the overall effect of winning on the probability of winning again

5 Mechanisms

Our main results show two major consequences of winning an election, which both contribute to the incumbency advantage in multi-party settings. First, an effect on candidates' entry in the next election: the winner (or another candidate from their party) is more likely to run again while other candidates from the same orientation are more likely to stay out of the race. Second, an effect on vote shares and on the probability of winning the next election, conditional on running again. While the first effect is primarily due to candidate behavior and the second to voter behavior, they are likely to complement each other. Indeed, the incumbent may be more likely to run in the next election and their competitors (other candidates on the same side as well as the runner-up from the previous election) to stay out because they all expect voters to have a preference for the incumbent. Facing fewer competitors on their side, the incumbent candidate and party are better able to rally base voters and thus to win the election again.

Several mechanisms may drive these effects and favor incumbents' reelection. We focus on candidates' campaigning strategies and on the coordination between parties and between voters.

5.1 Advantage in running and campaigning

We first examine a "direct" mechanism that has only been partly investigated in the existing literature on incumbency advantage (see Section 1.1). Incumbents may be able to mobilize more resources and run better campaigns than challengers, possibly thanks to the experience and connections they gained in office. In turn, this may enable them to win more votes, conditional on running. Incumbents' decision to run again more often, while other candidates from the same ori-

entation prefer dropping out, may come in part from other candidates anticipating that they will face these disadvantages.[30]

To test for the existence of an advantage in campaigning, conditional on running, we follow the strategy from Section 4.3 and derive bounds on the conditional impact of winning on the candidate's total campaign expenditures, total contributions, and manifesto personalization in the next election. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5: Bounds on the impact of winning on campaign money and manifesto personalization in the next election, conditional on running

	Expend., t+1	Contrib., t+1	Originality, t+1	Personal pronouns, t+1	Past tense, t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Upper Bound	10579.803***	11676.458***	0.527***	0.304***	0.990***
	(1056.968)	(1214.701)	(0.105)	(0.061)	(0.126)
Lower Bound	459.623	719.414	0.190**	0.084*	0.364***
	(616.297)	(694.578)	(0.076)	(0.043)	(0.091)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	19046.601	20264.168	0.148	0.410	1.979

Notes: In columns 1 and 2, the sample is restricted to elections preceding an election for which data on campaign expenditures and contributions are available (i.e., elections held in 1985 or later). In columns 3 through 5, the sample is restricted to parliamentary elections preceding an election for which candidate manifestos are available (i.e., elections held between 1958 and 1993 as well as in 2012). The outcome is the candidate's campaign expenditures (column 1) and total contributions received (column 2) in euros, the originality of the candidate's manifesto as measured by its distance to any other manifesto from the same party (column 3), and the percentage of words in the candidate's manifesto that are personal pronouns (column 4) and past participles (column 5) in the next election. Other notes as in Table 4.

While the lower bounds on the impact of winning on total expenditures and contributions are positive (column 1 and 2), they are small and non-significant. Therefore, we cannot conclude that incumbents are better able to raise money than opponents.[31] By contrast, both the upper and lower bounds on the impact on the originality of the candidate's manifesto issued before the next election

[30] In theory, candidates of other orientations could also be scared off if they expect the incumbent to have more resources. However, this effect is likely stronger for ideologically-close candidates who are competing for the same base voters.

[31] Finding a significant effect of winning the current election on campaign contributions in the next election could have been interpreted in two ways: increased campaign contributions to incumbents' campaigns may contribute to the effects we observe on winning or they may be driven by access-seeking donors' expectation that incumbents will win with a higher likelihood (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014). Instead, we do not find any evidence that donors give to incumbents more than to challengers in French elections. The difference with the U.S. could be due to stricter campaign finance regulations in France, which limit the influence of money in politics.

are positive and significant at the 1% level. Winning the current election raises a candidate's future originality by 0.19 to 0.53 standard deviations, conditional on running again.[32]

The originality of a candidate's manifesto relative to other candidates from the same party reflects their ability and effort to use messages that are personal and tailored to their local electorate. Hence, our findings suggest that incumbents tend to run higher-quality campaigns than their competitors, possibly because being in office has given them access to better resources (e.g., better campaign advisors) or because they have formed better communication skills during their mandate. They may also advertise and take credit for their personal achievements in office, which challengers cannot do. Consistent with this interpretation, columns 4 and 5 of Table 5 show that incumbents tend to use first person's personal pronouns and past participles more often than challengers. The lower bound for the conditional effect of winning is significant for both outcomes (at the 10% and 1% level, respectively) and corresponds to about 20% of their mean value at the left of the threshold.

An alternative explanation is that challengers are less well-known, so their best chance to win votes is to advertise the party platform, which voters may recognize, rather than personalize their campaign communication. Either way, these results suggest that the incumbency advantage is, at least in part, due to the type of campaign run by candidates.

5.2 Party-level dropout agreements

In two-round electoral systems, party agreements are common between the first round and the runoff. Parties with no candidate admitted at the runoff often endorse candidates belonging to other parties from the same orientation. Even parties with a candidate qualified for the runoff may agree to ask their candidate to drop out and endorse another candidate from the same political orientation. Here, we examine situations in which parties agree on a common candidate even before the first round. Sister parties from the same orientation may coordinate and agree to leave the incumbent candidate or party unchallenged, in order to avoid splitting the votes between them

[32]To calculate the upper bound on the effect on originality conditional on running again in the next election, we assume that, had they run again, the originality index of compliers who do not re-run after losing the current election would have been equal to the first decile of the index among candidates who run again. This assumption is different than for other outcomes (e.g., vote share or campaign contributions), for which we assume that this counterfactual quantity is equal to zero. Indeed, unlike those outcomes whose minimal value is zero, the originality index can take any negative value.

and ideologically-close opponents. In exchange, the incumbent party may agree to stay out of races in other constituencies or for other offices in the same locality. In the presence of such party coordination, one may expect the negative impact of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election to be stronger for candidates affiliated with a party than for independent candidates. Indeed, the latter are less likely to be affected by party-level agreements when they decide whether or not to run, since they are not affiliated with any party.

To test this hypothesis, we estimate equation 1 in the orientation-level sample, using as outcomes the number of other candidates from the same orientation that are affiliated with a party and the number of other candidates from the same orientation that run as independents, in the next election. Independent candidates are those whose political label assigned by the Ministry of the Interior does not correspond to a party organization. The results, shown in Table 6, reveal that the overall impact of winning on dropout decisions of ideologically-close candidates is almost entirely driven by candidates affiliated with a party: winning the current election reduces the number of party-endorsed competitors from the same orientation by 0.37, an estimate that is significant at the 1% level and represents a 26% decrease relative to the mean at the left of the threshold (column 2). Conversely, the effect on the number of independent competitors from the same orientation is non-significant and much smaller in magnitude (column 3). As reported in the bottom of Table 6, we can reject the null hypothesis that the two coefficients are equal.

These results provide suggestive evidence that party-level agreements play a key role in determining who enters the race. If the factor deterring candidates from the same orientation as the incumbent from entering the race was their expectation that voters will favor the incumbent (due, for instance, to their accumulated experience), thereby reducing their own chances of winning, the two coefficients shown in Table 6 should be of similar magnitude. Indeed, winning the current election should deter all competitors from entering the next race, whether they are endorsed by a party or not. Instead, the fact that the effect on the number of future competitors from the same orientation that are affiliated with a party is much larger suggests that party coordination is a first-order determinant of candidates' decision to run. One possible interpretation is that parties make national agreements to avoid presenting a candidate in constituencies in which the incumbent is affiliated with an allied party. Incumbency may thus be used by allied parties as a coordination device to limit the number of ideologically close competitors. Instead, independent candidates

Table 6: Impact of winning on the number of other party-affiliated vs. independent candidates from the same orientation

	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. other party cand., t+1	Orient. nb. other indep. cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment effect	-0.426***	-0.370***	-0.056
	(0.066)	(0.056)	(0.040)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.645
Observations	6575	6575	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	1.854	1.404	0.450
		Wald test (2)-(3)	
		Chi2	Robust p-value
		17.59	0.000

Notes: The outcome is the total number of other candidates from the same orientation (column 1), the number of other candidates from the same orientation who are affiliated with a party (column 2), and the number of candidates from the same orientation who run as independents (column 3). Other notes as in Table 3, column 3. A Wald test of equality of coefficients from columns 2 and 3 is provided below. The test is performed by running two separate linear regressions of the outcomes in columns 2 and 3 on the treatment dummy, the running variable, and the interaction term. The Wald test is then performed on the estimates, stored with the *suest* Stata command.

are not bound by such agreements. It is also possible that incumbent parties are in a better position to make promises or give political favors to their allies. For instance, the incumbent's party may promise not to field a candidate in the next local elections or to send funds to some specific localities.[33]

The analysis above considers agreements between parties from the same *orientation*, as these broadly-defined orientations remain stable over time. As shown in Appendix Table A.5, we find very similar results when we estimate the impact of winning on the entry of other candidates from the same *coalition*, defined as alliances formed between left- or right-wing parties prior to the election.[34] We also find in Appendix Table A.6 that the impact of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election is larger for candidates who are presently facing a large number of ideologically close competitors: winning the current election against an above-average number of competitors from the same orientation reduces the future number of

[33]Similarly, Cox (1997) argues that parties that can negotiate at the national level and that have access to more resources are better able to solve coordination issues regarding how many candidates should run in single non transferable vote systems, such as Japan.

[34]These coalitions are less stable over time (e.g., candidates from the Green party used to run alone but started joining the left-wing coalition in 1992). We hand-coded coalitions formed by the seven major parties in our sample, as described in Appendix D.3.

such competitors by 0.528 (column 2) against 0.378 for candidates facing a below-average number of same-orientation competitors (column 4). The incumbency advantage is similar in size for both types of candidates (columns 1 and 3), suggesting that incumbents who won against many candidates from the same orientation manage to reach dropout agreements to secure their probability of winning the next election.

5.3 Focal point effects

We finally test whether the incumbency advantage stems from the fact that, in and of itself, and independently from the benefits of being in office, winning an election turns a candidate into a focal point. Being a focal point may attract voters and increase vote shares conditional on running: Voters may use the candidate (or the party) that won the previous election as a coordination device to avoid splitting their votes if they have to choose between multiple candidates from the same orientation.[35] Being a focal point may also facilitate dropout agreements among parties from the same orientation. However, it is not possible to directly isolate this focal point effect from other effects resulting from the incumbent being in office. Therefore, we provide an indirect test of this "focal point hypothesis" by estimating the effects of *another* focal point: the qualification of a specific candidate or party for the runoff. Qualifying for the runoff signals that a candidate is a strong contender and gives them visibility, but it does not come with any actual power (unless of course the candidate also wins the election).

RDD framework We estimate the causal impact of runoff qualification on future electoral outcomes (i.e., over the next electoral cycle) using a complementary RDD. Our running variable is the margin of qualification, defined in two different ways to account for the fact that two different types of candidates qualify for the second round, as indicated in Section 2.1: the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round, and any other candidate who passed the qualification threshold of votes.

First, in races where the candidate ranked second in the first round passes the qualification threshold, so that a third candidate could also qualify by passing the qualification threshold, we

[35] In Duverger (1972)'s terminology, voters rallying prominent candidates who have better chances of winning is a "psychological effect." This effect may reflect both the higher visibility of runoff candidates and the bad publicity associated with failing to qualify for the runoff.

estimate the impact for the third-ranked candidate to qualify. We use one observation per race as in Pons and Tricaud (2018), and define the running variable as the difference between the first round vote share of this candidate and the qualification threshold.[36] For example, in elections with a qualification threshold equal to 12.5% of registered voters, third-ranked candidates with a first round vote share of 12.5% or more are treated and their running variable is positive. Conversely, third-ranked candidates with a vote share lower than 12.5% are not treated and their running variable takes a negative value.

Second, in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold, the only candidates allowed to compete in the runoff are the top-two candidates. In other words, the candidates qualified for the second round are the first candidate and whichever of the two next candidates gets the most votes. We estimate the impact for the second-ranked candidate to qualify by getting more votes than the third-ranked candidate.[37] Formally, we use two observations per race, corresponding to the second and third-ranked candidates, who are respectively treated and not treated. We define the running variable as the (positive) difference between the second and third candidate's vote shares, for the second candidate; and as the (negative) difference between the third and second candidate's vote shares, for the third candidate.

We pool both sets of races to estimate the overall impact of qualifying for the runoff. We use a specification in the form of equation 1, where the running variable $Marg$ is defined as described above, and with a fixed bandwidth of 2.5 percentage points.[38] Appendix F provides additional details on the sample and on our identifying assumptions.

[36] Unlike Pons and Tricaud (2018), we study the impact of the qualification of the third-ranked candidate in election t on this candidate's own electoral success in election $t+1$, not on the electoral success of the other candidates qualified in the runoff of election t. The qualification threshold was 5% of cast votes for parliamentary elections before 1967, 10% of registered voters for parliamentary elections from 1967 to 1973 and local elections before 2015, and 12.5% of registered voters for the remaining elections. All vote shares and qualification thresholds use the number of registered voters as denominator.

[37] The effects obtained with this second source of variation (shown in isolation in Appendix Table A.7) may capture both the impact of qualifying for the runoff and the impact of obtaining a higher rank (second instead of third). As shown by Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) and Granzier et al. (2023a), obtaining a higher rank may affect future outcomes in and of itself, independently of the visibility that comes from qualifying for the runoff. Our results are qualitatively similar, albeit smaller in magnitude, when using only the first source of variation (Appendix Table A.8), indicating that qualification matters per se, independently of ranking effects.

[38] We use a bandwidth of 2.5 instead of 5 percentage points because the support of the running variable is much smaller than in our main RDD. In addition, while our running variable and bandwidth are defined as shares of cast votes when we estimate the impact of winning the election, they are defined as shares of registered voters when we estimate the impact of qualifying for the runoff.

Results As shown in Figure 4, the probability of winning the next election (Figure 4a), of running again (Figure 4b), and of qualifying for the runoff again in the next election (Figure 4c) all jump at the qualification threshold. Table 7 provides formal estimates. Despite the jump visible in Figure 4a, the effect on winning the election is not statistically significant (column 1). However, qualifying for the runoff does raise a candidate's likelihood to run again and to qualify for the runoff in the next election, by 5.0 and 4.9 percentage points, which is significant at the 10 and 5% level respectively (columns 2 and 3).

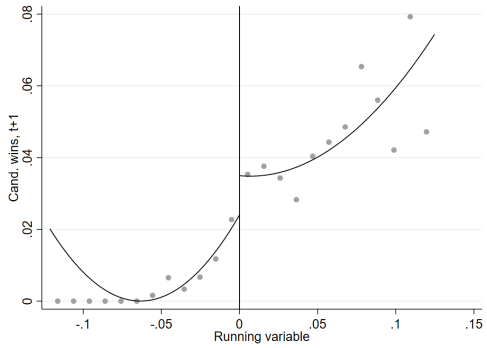
It is important to note that qualifying for the runoff increases the likelihood that a candidate wins the *current* election from 0 to 3.5%, as shown in column 1 of Appendix Table A.9. But we know from Section 4 that winning the current election increases the likelihood of competing in the next one and winning it. Therefore, the effects of qualifying for the runoff on outcomes at t+1 could be driven, in part, by the increased likelihood of winning at t. Multiplying the effect of runoff qualification on winning at t (shown in Appendix Table A.9, column 1) by the effects of winning at t on t+1 outcomes (shown in columns 2 through 4), we obtain predicted effects of 0.9, 1.1, and 0.9 percentage points on winning, running, and qualifying for the runoff of the next election, respectively.[39] Importantly, all these predicted effects are smaller than the actual effects shown in Table 7, columns 1 through 3. These results suggest that qualifying for the runoff leads candidates to enter the next race more often and increases their future electoral success, as measured by vote shares and runoff qualification, whether or not they win the current race.[40] Since runoff qualification is unlikely to provide candidates with better skills or experience, we interpret these findings as evidence of a focal point effect, independent from any future quality differentials between marginally qualified and unqualified candidates.

[39] This exercise assumes that the impact of winning among closely-qualified candidates is similar as among close winners. Supporting this assumption, close qualifiers who win the election also tend to win with a relatively narrow margin of victory: 7.1 percentage points, on average.

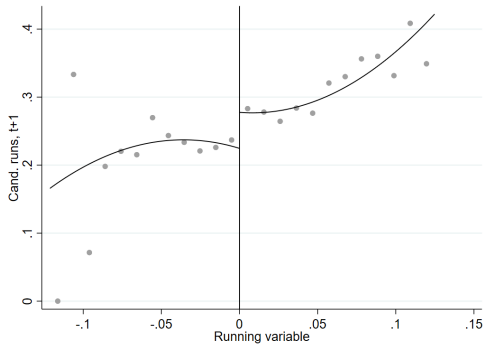
[40] Appendix Table A.10 shows qualitatively similar but smaller effects at the party level. We also find that these patterns are mostly driven by the qualification of second-ranked candidates as opposed to the qualification of third-ranked candidates, suggesting that candidates are more likely to become focal points when fewer of them qualified for the second round (Appendix Tables A.7 and A.8).

Figure 4: Impact of runoff qualification on electoral success and candidate entry in the next election

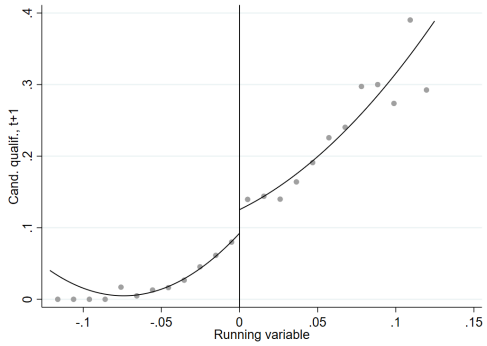
(a) Candidate wins the next election



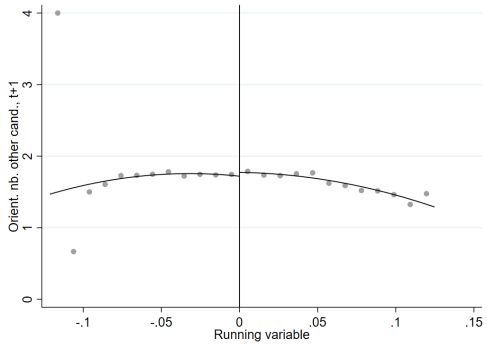
(b) Candidate runs in the next election



(c) Candidate qualifies for the runoff in the next election



(d) Number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election



Notes: The running variable (the difference between the vote share of the third-ranked candidate and the qualification threshold or the vote share difference between the second- and third-ranked candidates) is measured as percentage points relative to the number of registered voters, and each bin is 1-percentage-point wide. The graph is truncated at 12.5 percentage points on the horizontal axis to accommodate for outliers. In Figure 4d, we use our orientation-level runoff sample. Other notes as in Figures 2 and 3c.

In Appendix Table A.11, we implement the strategy described in Section 4.3 to derive bounds on the impact of qualifying for the runoff, conditional on running again. Results show that the bounds on the impact on winning the next election are both positive but not significant at conventional levels (column 1). However, the upper and lower bounds on the effects on the candidate's vote share in the first round of the next election (column 2) and on the probability that they qualify for the runoff again (column 3) are all positive and significant at the 5% or 1% level. They account for a 1.8 to 5.1 and a 8.7 to 16.8 percentage points increases, respectively.

The effects of runoff qualification on future electoral success seem to be mostly driven by voter behavior. Indeed, Figure 4d as well as column 4 of Table 7 show a non-significant and *positive* – rather than negative – effect of runoff qualification on the number of other candidates from the

Table 7: Impact of runoff qualification on electoral success and candidate entry in the next election

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.012	0.050*	0.049**	0.062	0.109
	(0.008)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.055)	(0.054)
Robust p-value	0.342	0.056	0.021	0.343	0.113
Observations	7706	7706	7706	7252	7252
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.016	0.228	0.067	1.744	1.961

Notes: The unit of observation is the candidate. The outcome is a dummy equal to one if the candidate wins (column 1), runs (column 2), or qualifies for the runoff (column 3) in the next election, the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election (column 4), and the total number of candidates from the same orientation (column 5). The treatment variable is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate qualifies for the runoff in the current election. We use local polynomial regressions: we fit separate polynomials of order 1 on each side of the threshold, using a fixed bandwidth of 2.5 percentage points. The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for unqualified candidates at the threshold. In columns 4 and 5, we use our orientation-level runoff sample. Other notes as in Table 2.

same orientation in the next election. The estimated effect on the total number of candidates from the same orientation is even larger, although it is not significant either (Table 7, column 5). In addition, bounds on the effects of qualifying for the runoff – conditional on re-running – on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election are of opposite signs and non-significant (Appendix Table A.11, column 4). Unlike winning, qualifying for the runoff is *not* sufficient to reach dropout agreements and deter ideologically close candidates from entering the next race – even when the qualified candidate runs again in the next election. These results indicate the existence of a focal point effect driven by voters' choices rather than other candidates' decision to run.

Furthermore, as shown in Table A.14, we do not find any clear evidence that qualifying for the runoff significantly affects candidates' ability to raise campaign money or the personalization of their platform, conditional on running again: most lower bounds are positive but small and non-significant. Finally, we find that qualifying for the runoff only benefits candidates who will not face other higher-ranked candidates from the same orientation and will thus not have to share their increased visibility with any other ideologically-close candidate, further highlighting the importance of focal point effects (see Appendix F and Appendix Tables A.12 and A.13).

Since candidates who marginally qualify for the runoff generally do not win the current election and we do not find any significant impact on the number of competitors from the same orientation, campaign money, and manifesto originality, we conclude that the impact of runoff qualification on electoral success at the next election conditional on running cleanly isolates a focal point effect on the voter side: voters tend to rally candidates who gained visibility in the previous election. This effect is likely to be present also for candidates who won the previous election and, thus, to contribute to the incumbency advantage, even though it is harder to isolate in that case.

6 Conclusion

Using an RDD in French local and parliamentary elections, this paper shows that candidates who marginally win a race are substantially more likely to compete again and win the next election than their closest challenger. The effects are large (32.9 and 25.1 percentage points) and also present at the party and orientation levels.

Two complementary mechanisms contribute to giving incumbents an electoral advantage. First, some voters rally incumbents when those seek reelection. We find suggestive evidence that the effect of past victories on voter choice in future elections is driven by incumbents using more personalized campaign communication and by the fact that they become focal points. Indeed, using a separate RDD, we also find a substantial effect on future first-round vote shares of marginally qualifying for the runoff, which cannot be explained by any advantage resulting from being in office. This focal point mechanism also echoes previous work documenting voter coordination based on candidate rankings in the previous election (e.g., Anagol and Fujiwara (2016), Granzier et al. (2023a)).

Second, winning an election decreases the number of ideologically close competitors faced by the candidate in the next election, particularly competitors endorsed by a party. This result suggests that incumbents reach dropout agreements with sister parties from the same orientation more easily than their challengers. In other words, party coordination is more effective on the winning than the losing side. This mechanism, specific to multi-party settings, reinforces other, more direct mechanisms giving incumbents an advantage, which are also present in two-party systems. However, the overall magnitude of the incumbency advantage remains smaller in France than in the

U.S. (25% against 45%, as found in Lee (2008)), even though the two-party system of the U.S. limits coordination failures. This suggests that other sources of incumbency advantage are weaker in France than in the U.S. In particular, France's more stringent campaign finance rules may prevent incumbents from accumulating disproportionately more contributions than their opponents.

Since we use an RDD, all our effects are estimated out of elections in which the winning and losing candidates have virtually identical vote shares and average characteristics ex ante. One may thus be concerned that incumbents' victory gives them such an outsized political rent. True, part of the incumbency advantage may arise from "enriching" characteristics of incumbency: the experience accumulated by incumbents may make them objectively more qualified than challengers who were initially similar. Moreover, the fact that incumbency facilitates coordination across party lines may be seen as a positive result in and of itself. More concerning is the possibility that part of the advantage enjoyed by incumbents in multi-party systems results from the fact that they represent a focal point for ideologically-close voters. This advantage may lead them to exert less effort and it may sometimes be sufficient to prevent their replacement by candidates who would better represent voter preferences or have higher valence. The systematic coordination issues arising on the losing side, when more than two candidates are present, should be considered when weighing the merits and drawbacks of voting rules conducive to the emergence of multi-party systems, such as the two-round plurality rule used in French elections.[41] Meanwhile, non-incumbent parties desiring to reduce their disadvantage relative to the incumbent may attempt to address coordination issues on their own, for instance by organizing orientation-level primaries or reaching more stringent dropout agreements.

[41] The two-round plurality rule in single-member districts which characterizes French elections leads to the emergence of a multi-party system in a majoritarian setting. This combination makes coordination issues particularly consequential. Multi-party systems can also emerge under proportional representation but coordination issues are less important in that case because all parties obtain seats proportional to their votes and may ally in the parliament, after the election.

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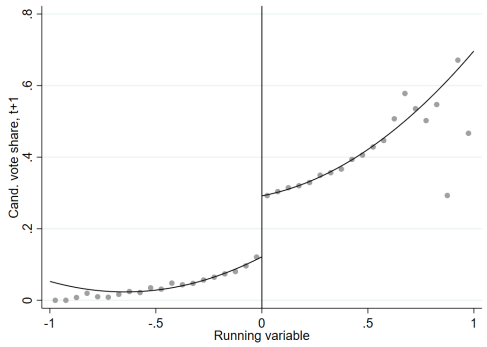
Online Appendix

Table of Content

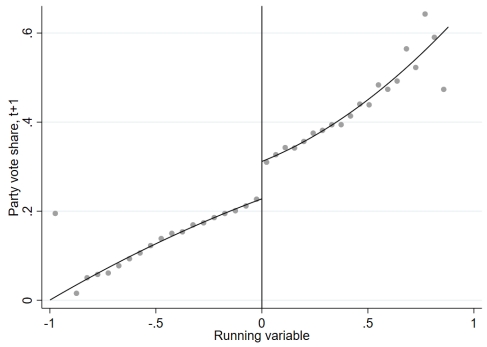
A Additional Results

Figure A.1: Unconditional impact on first-round vote share in the next election

(a) Candidate's vote share



(b) Party's vote share



Notes: The party's vote share in Figure A.1b is defined as the sum of vote shares received by all candidates from the same party running in the same district. The outcome is set to zero when the same candidate does not run again (Figure A.1a) or when no candidate from the same party runs again (Figure A.1b). Other notes as in Figure 2.

Table A.1: Heterogeneous impact of winning on winning the next election

	Cand. wins, t+1													
	(1) Local	(2) Parliamentary	(3) Male	(4) Female	(5) Left or far-left	(6) Other orientations	(7) Opposition	(8) Majority	(9) FDG	(10) SOC	(11) MDM	(12) UMP	(13) Before 1994	(14) After 1994
Treatment effect	0.307***	0.162**	0.254***	0.221	0.254***	0.252***	0.277***	0.184**	0.194	0.252***	0.356***	0.191*	0.238***	0.263***
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.023)	(0.080)	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.089)	(0.041)	(0.055)	(0.043)	(0.033)	(0.030)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.039	0.000	0.363	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.156	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.000	0.000
Observations	4768	2604	6758	612	3941	3423	3458	2544	536	2278	1075	1809	3622	3750
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.124	0.194	0.152	0.109	0.117	0.182	0.189	0.101	0.179	0.190	0.093	0.130	0.148	0.148

Notes: The sample is restricted to local elections (column 1); parliamentary elections (column 2); men (column 3); women (column 4); candidates whose orientation is left or far-left (column 5); candidates from all other orientations (column 6); candidates affiliated with a party that is not part of the ruling national government at t+1 (column 7); candidates affiliated with a party that is part of the ruling national government at t+1 (column 8); candidates affiliated with the Front de Gauche (column 9), the Socialist Party (column 10), the Modem (column 11), or the UMP (column 12); and elections held in 1994 or earlier (column 13) or after 1994 (column 14). Other notes as in Table 2, column 1.

Table A.2: Heterogeneous impact of winning on running in the next election

	Cand. runs, t+1													
	(1) Local	(2) Parliamentary	(3) Male	(4) Female	(5) Left or far-left	(6) Other orientations	(7) Opposition	(8) Majority	(9) FDG	(10) SOC	(11) MDM	(12) UMP	(13) Before 1994	(14) After 1994
Treatment effect	0.335***	0.320***	0.316***	0.465***	0.331***	0.330***	0.309***	0.292***	0.218*	0.332***	0.336***	0.283***	0.324***	0.335***
	(0.030)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.074)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.079)	(0.041)	(0.063)	(0.050)	(0.034)	(0.032)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
Observations	4768	2604	6758	612	3941	3423	3458	2544	536	2278	1075	1809	3622	3750
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.353	0.456	0.395	0.334	0.353	0.429	0.417	0.360	0.577	0.402	0.314	0.370	0.390	0.390

Notes: Same notes as in Table A.1.

Table A.3: Impact of winning on the number of candidates from neighboring orientations in the next election

	Neighboring Orient. nb. all cand., t+1	
	(1)	(2)
Treatment effect	-0.003	-0.016
	(0.059)	(0.058)
Robust p-value	0.792	0.799
Observations	6575	6162
Polynomial order	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	1.063	1.024
Sample	All cand.	One orient. apart

Notes: The outcome is the number of candidates from neighboring orientations. We use the orientation-level sample (column 1) and restrict it to races in which the two opponents' orientations are separated by at least one orientation (column 2). Other notes as in Table 3.

Table A.4: Bounds on the impact of winning on party's electoral success and candidate entry in the next election, conditional on running

	Party wins, t+1	Party vote share, t+1	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Upper Bound	0.156***	0.069***	-0.107
	(0.037)	(0.010)	(0.074)
Lower Bound	0.128***	0.051***	-0.147**
	(0.035)	(0.007)	(0.071)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	0.336	0.285	1.403

Notes: Candidates who are not affiliated with a main party and those who are facing a candidate from the same party are excluded. Other notes as in Table 4.

Table A.5: Impact of winning on the number of other candidates from the same coalition

	Coal. nb. other cand., t+1	Coal. any other cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)
Treatment effect	-0.359***	-0.165***
	(0.058)	(0.026)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000
Observations	5706	5706
Polynomial order	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	1.443	0.829

Notes: Candidates who are not part of the main left-wing or right-wing coalition and those who are facing a candidate from the same coalition are excluded. The outcome is the number of other candidates from the same coalition (column 1) and a dummy equal to one if any candidate from the same coalition runs (column 2) in the next election. Other notes as in Table 6.

Table A.6: Impact of winning depending on the number of candidates from the same orientation in the current election

	Cand. wins, t+1 (more than avg)	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1 (more than avg)	Cand wins., t+1 (fewer than avg)	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1 (fewer than avg)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment effect	0.263***	-0.528**	0.245***	-0.378***
	(0.040)	(0.119)	(0.027)	(0.072)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.011	0.000	0.001
Observations	2585	2133	4787	4442
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.169	2.424	0.137	1.576

Notes: The sample is restricted to candidates who are facing a number of candidates from the same orientation above average (columns 1 and 2) or below average (columns 3 and 4) in the current election. Other notes as in Table 2, column 1, and Table 3, column 3.

Table A.7: Impact of runoff qualification for the second-ranked candidate

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.051	0.060**	0.101***	-0.027	-0.038
	(0.022)	(0.044)	(0.033)	(0.143)	(0.142)
Robust p-value	0.107	0.039	0.001	0.991	0.944
Observations	1490	1490	1490	1143	1143
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.024	0.259	0.087	1.902	2.149

Notes: The sample is restricted to second- and third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold. Other notes as in Table 7.

Table A.8: Impact of runoff qualification for the third-ranked candidate

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	-0.002	0.047	0.033	0.084	0.143*
	(0.008)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.059)	(0.058)
Robust p-value	0.693	0.258	0.419	0.275	0.071
Observations	6216	6216	6216	6109	6109
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.014	0.221	0.063	1.717	1.928

Notes: The sample is restricted to third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidate passes the qualification threshold. Other notes as in Table 7.

Table A.9: Decomposition of the impact of runoff qualification

	Cand wins, t	Cand wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand qualif., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment effect	0.035***	0.251***	0.329***	0.255***
	(0.006)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	7706	7372	7372	7372
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.000	0.148	0.390	0.318
Treatment	Runoff	Winning	Winning	Winning
Pred. treatment effect		0.009	0.011	0.009

Notes: In column 1, we measure the impact of qualifying for the runoff. We estimate a specification as in Table 7 and the outcome is a dummy equal to one if the candidate wins the current election. In columns 2 through 4, we measure the impact of winning. We estimate a specification as in Table 2, column 1, and the outcomes are dummies equal to one if the candidate wins the next election (column 2), runs in the next election (column 3), or qualifies for the runoff in the next election (column 4). We also report the estimates obtained by multiplying the effect of runoff qualification on winning at t (shown in column 1) by the effects of winning at t on t+1 outcomes (shown in columns 2 through 4). Other notes as in Tables 2 and 7.

Table A.10: Impact of runoff qualification on party's electoral success and party entry in the next election

	Party wins, t+1	Party runs, t+1	Party qualif., t+1	Orient. nb. other cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment effect	0.016	0.006	0.060*	0.119*
	(0.013)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.059)
Robust p-value	0.240	0.533	0.096	0.061
Observations	6130	6130	5532	5685
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.038	0.831	0.251	1.085

Notes: We use our party-level runoff sample. Other notes as in Table 7.

Table A.11: Bounds on the impact of runoff qualification on electoral success and candidate entry in the next election, conditional on running

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. vote share, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient. nb. other cand.,t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Upper Bound	0.041	0.050***	0.168***	0.148
	(0.028)	(0.013)	(0.048)	(0.101)
Lower Bound	0.019	0.018***	0.087**	-0.016
	(0.024)	(0.007)	(0.038)	(0.105)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	0.070	0.151	0.295	1.287

Notes: The outcome is a dummy equal to one if the candidate wins (column 1), their vote share in the first round (column 2), a dummy equal to one if they qualify for the runoff (column 3) in the next election, and the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election (column 4). The treatment variable is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate qualifies for the runoff in the current election. We rely on the bounding strategy described in Appendix E, using a fixed bandwidth of 2.5 percentage points. The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for the unqualified candidates at the threshold, conditional on the candidate running in the next election. In column 4, we use our orientation-level runoff sample. Other notes as in Table 4.

Table A.12: Impact of runoff qualification depending on the political orientation

(a) Same orientation as higher-ranked candidates

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.000	0.039	0.025	0.039	0.083
	(0.012)	(0.032)	(0.021)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Robust p-value	0.779	0.255	0.615	0.555	0.313
Observations	3410	3410	3410	3355	3355
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.018	0.246	0.072	2.213	2.448

(b) Different orientation than higher-ranked candidates

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. runs, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient nb. other cand., t+1	Orient nb. all cand., t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.024	0.067*	0.071***	0.041	0.089
	(0.011)	(0.029)	(0.020)	(0.071)	(0.069)
Robust p-value	0.100	0.060	0.007	0.698	0.359
Observations	4167	4167	4167	3897	3897
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.013	0.214	0.062	1.372	1.574

Notes: In columns 1 and 2, the sample is restricted to third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidate passes the qualification threshold and either the second- or first-ranked candidate is from the same orientation as the third, and to second- and third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidates does not pass the qualification threshold and the first-ranked candidate is from the same orientation as the second- or third-ranked candidate. In columns 3 and 4, the sample is restricted to third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidate passes the qualification threshold and both the second- and first-ranked candidates are of a different orientation than the third, and to second- and third-ranked candidates in races where the second-ranked candidates does not pass the qualification threshold and the first-ranked candidate is of a different orientation than the second- and third-ranked candidates. Candidates whose orientation is non-classified are excluded. Other notes as in Table 7.

Table A.13: Bounds on impact of runoff qualification, conditional on running and depending on the political orientation

(a) Same orientation as higher-ranked candidates

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. vote share, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient. nb. other cand.,t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Upper Bound	0.001	0.034*	0.087	0.071
	(0.043)	(0.020)	(0.073)	(0.132)
Lower Bound	-0.016	0.009	0.028	-0.061
	(0.039)	(0.010)	(0.059)	(0.127)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	0.074	0.151	0.292	1.816

(b) Different orientation than higher-ranked candidates

	Cand. wins, t+1	Cand. vote share, t+1	Cand. qualif., t+1	Orient. nb. other cand.,t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Upper Bound	0.078**	0.067***	0.238***	0.181
	(0.036)	(0.018)	(0.062)	(0.128)
Lower Bound	0.048	0.023**	0.125**	-0.010
	(0.030)	(0.009)	(0.049)	(0.141)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	0.060	0.149	0.291	0.803

Notes: Same notes as in Tables A.11 and A.12.

Table A.14: Bounds on the impact of runoff qualification on campaign money and manifesto personalization in the next election, conditional on running

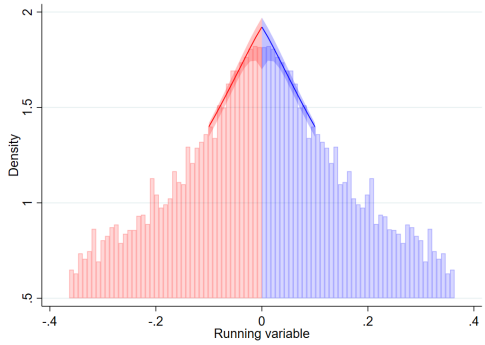
	Expenditures, t+1	Contributions, t+1	Manifesto originality, t+1	First person, t+1	Past tense, t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Upper bound	3291.547***	3439.867***	0.155	0.083	0.192
	(1073.035)	(1093.589)	(0.228)	(0.066)	(0.173)
Lower bound	560.533	646.386	-0.113	0.036	0.026
	(770.480)	(786.488)	(0.126)	(0.058)	(0.136)
Bootstrap replications	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Mean, left of threshold	11420.665	11620.358	-0.305	0.278	1.758

Notes: Same notes as in Tables 5 and A.11.

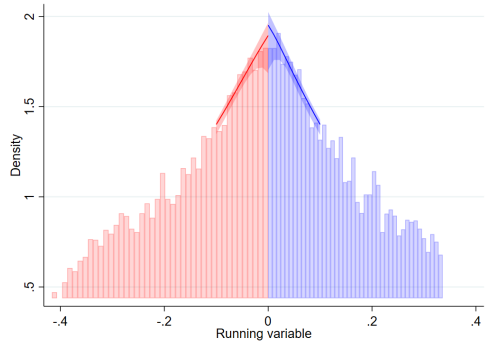
B Additional Balance Tests

Figure B.1: Running variable density around the threshold

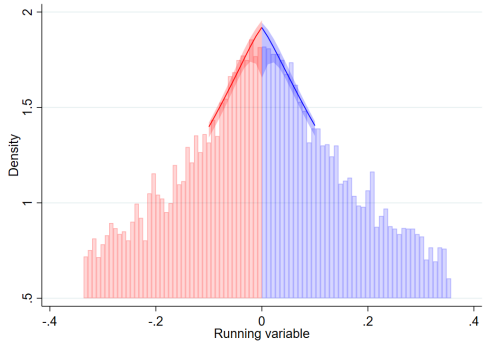
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



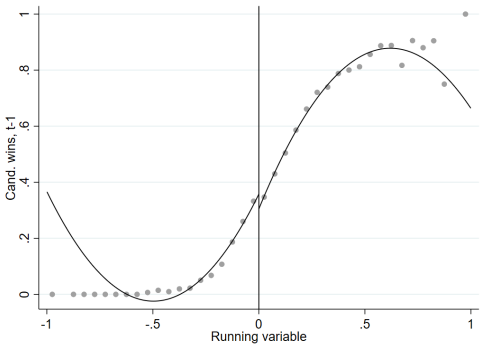
(c) Orientation level



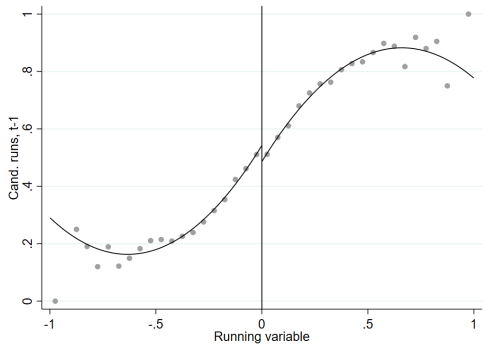
Notes: This figure tests if there is a jump at the threshold in the density of the running variable defined as the vote share difference between the top-two candidates in the final round, represented by a histogram. The solid line is a quadratic fit and the confidence intervals are represented by shaded areas. In Figure B.1a, this test is satisfied by construction since we consider the exact same set of races on both sides of the threshold and, in each race, the winning and losing candidates are equally distant to the cutoff. In Figure B.1b, we use our party-level sample. In Figure B.1c, we use our orientation-level sample. We find no evidence of manipulation of the running variable in the party-level sample (p-val. = 0.415), or in the orientation-level sample (p-val. = 0.978).

Figure B.2: Balance tests

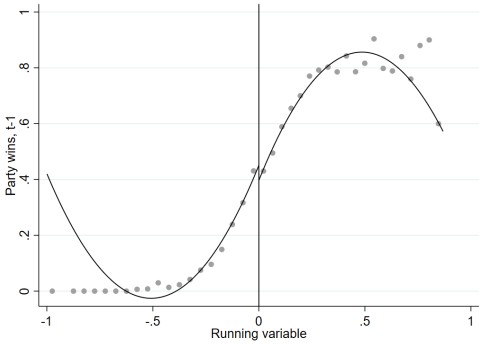
(a) Candidate won previous election



(b) Candidate ran in previous election



(c) Party won previous election



(d) Party ran in previous election

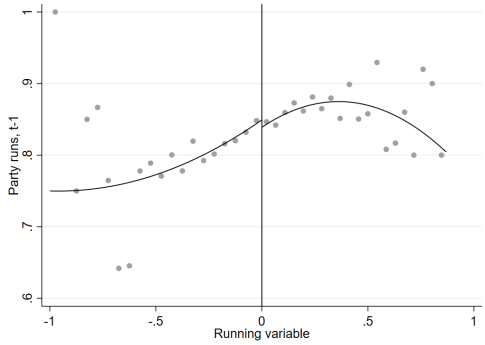
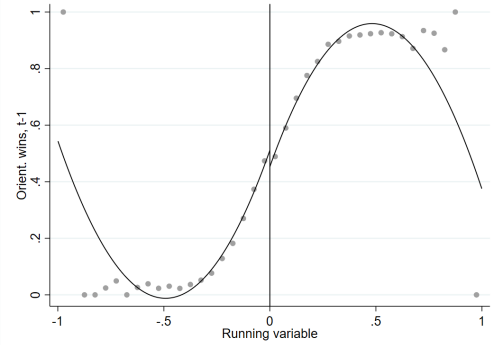
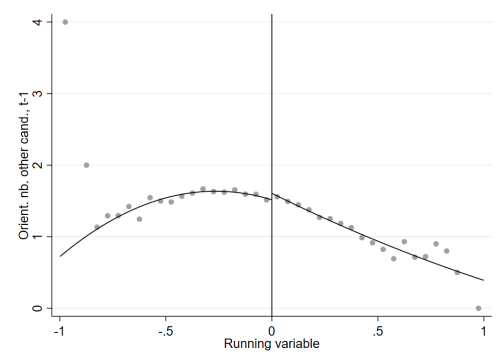


Figure B.2: Balance tests (cont.)

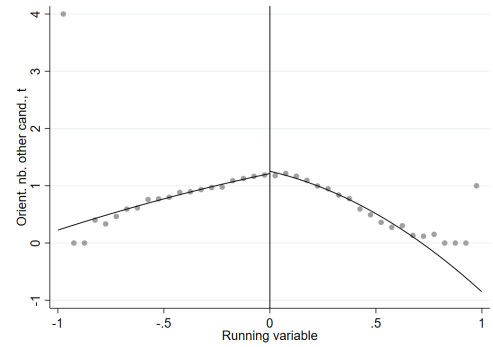
(e) Orientation won previous election



(f) Number of other candidates from same orientation in previous election



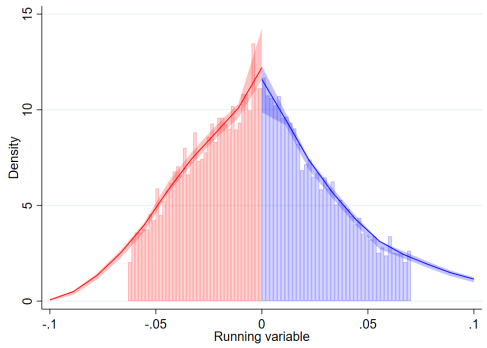
(g) Number of other candidates from same orientation in current election



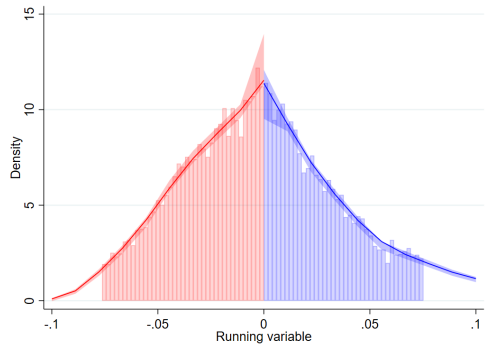
Notes: The sample is restricted to districts that can be linked to a previous election. In Figures B.2c and B.2d, we use our party-level sample. In Figures B.2e through B.2g, we use our orientation-level sample. Other notes as in Figure 1.

Figure B.3: Running variable density around the runoff qualification threshold

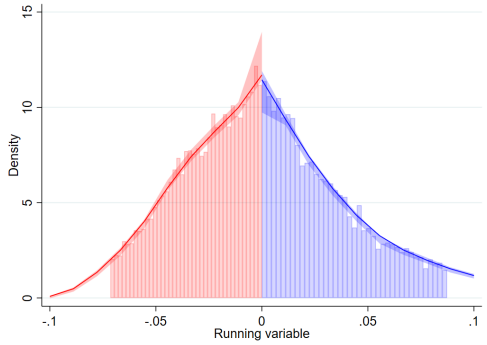
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



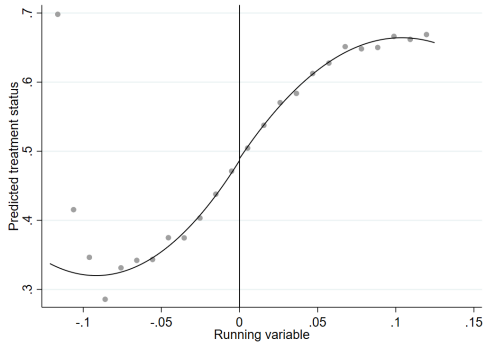
(c) Orientation level



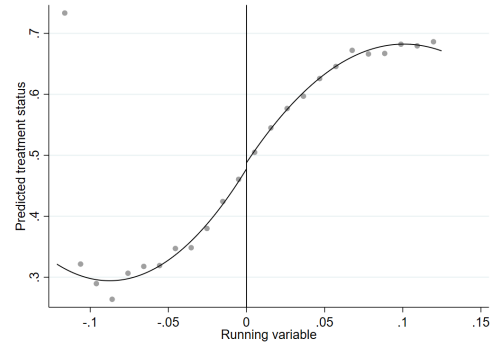
Notes: This figure tests if there is a jump at the threshold in the density of the running variable defined as the difference between the vote share of the third-ranked candidate and the qualification threshold or the vote share difference between the second- and third-ranked candidates, represented by an histogram. The solid line is a quadratic fit and the confidence intervals are represented by shaded areas. In Figure B.3b, we use our party-level runoff sample. In Figure B.3c, we use our orientation-level runoff sample. We find no evidence of manipulation of the running variable in the candidate-level sample (p-val. = 0.301), the party-level sample (p-val. = 0.789), or in the orientation-level sample (p-val. = 0.646).

Figure B.4: General balance test around the runoff qualification threshold

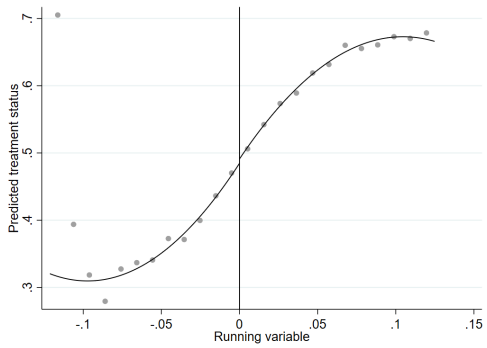
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



(c) Orientation level



Notes: Dots represent the local averages of the predicted treatment status (vertical axis). Averages are calculated within equally-spaced bins of the running variable (horizontal axis). The running variable (the difference between the vote share of the third-ranked candidate and the qualification threshold or the vote share difference between the second- and third-ranked candidates) is measured as percentage points relative to the number of registered voters, and each bin is 1-percentage-point wide. The graph is truncated at 12.5 percentage points on the horizontal axis to accommodate for outliers. Continuous lines are a quadratic fit. In Figure B.4b, we use our party-level runoff sample. In Figure B.4c, we use our orientation-level runoff sample.

Table B.1: Balance tests

(a) Covariates measured in the current election

	Far-left	Left	Center	Right	Far-right	Non classified	Orient. nb. other cand.	Party cand. vs. ind.	Female cand.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Treatment effect	0.005*	-0.046**	0.014*	0.032*	-0.007**	-0.010	0.002	0.012	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.026)	(0.008)	(0.026)	(0.003)	(0.052)	(0.004)	(0.020)	(0.015)
Robust p-value	0.069	0.036	0.069	0.097	0.046	0.625	0.436	0.618	0.902
Observations	7364	7364	7364	7364	7364	7364	7364	7364	7370
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.002	0.482	0.023	0.480	0.007	1.256	0.007	0.808	0.087

(b) Covariates measured in the previous election

	Cand. wins, t-1	Cand. vote share, t-1	Cand. runs, t-1	Party wins, t-1	Party vote share, t-1	Party runs, t-1	Orient. wins, t-1	Orient. vote share, t-1	Orient. runs, t-1	Orient. nb. other cand., t-1
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Treatment effect	-0.033	-0.013	-0.035	-0.024	-0.008	-0.021	-0.047	0.002	-0.021	0.074
	(0.028)	(0.012)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.011)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.009)	(0.023)	(0.067)
Robust p-value	0.773	0.659	0.781	0.646	0.400	0.352	0.303	0.700	0.352	0.460
Observations	5414	5414	5414	4266	4266	4266	5410	5410	4266	5410
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.333	0.181	0.511	0.432	0.281	0.847	0.514	0.440	0.847	1.522

Notes: In Panel b, the sample is restricted to districts that can be linked to a previous election. Other notes as in Table 1.

Table B.2: General balance test around the runoff qualification threshold

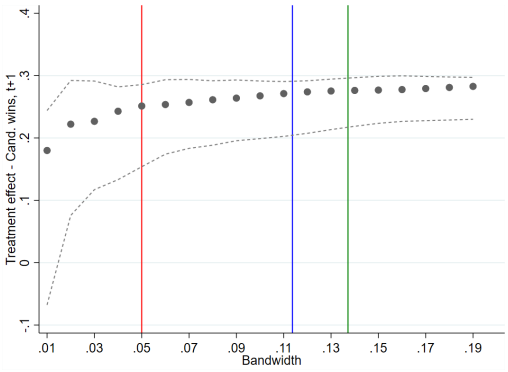
	Predicted treatment status		
	(1) Cand.	(2) Party	(3) Orient.
Treatment effect	-0.001	0.006	0.001
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Robust p-value	0.839	0.776	0.856
Observations	7706	6130	7255
Polynomial order	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.025	0.025	0.025
Mean, left of threshold	0.447	0.432	0.445

Notes: The treatment variable is a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate qualifies for the runoff. We use local polynomial regressions: we fit separate polynomials of order 1 on each side of the threshold, using a fixed bandwidth of 2.5 percentage points (relative to the number of registered voters). The mean, left of the threshold gives the value of the outcome for the unqualified candidate at the threshold. Other notes as in Table 1.

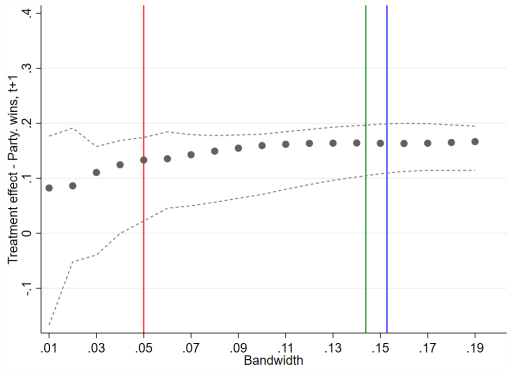
C Additional Robustness Checks

Figure C.1: Robustness of main results to bandwidth choice

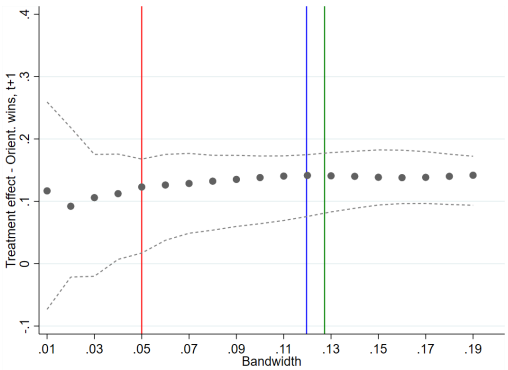
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



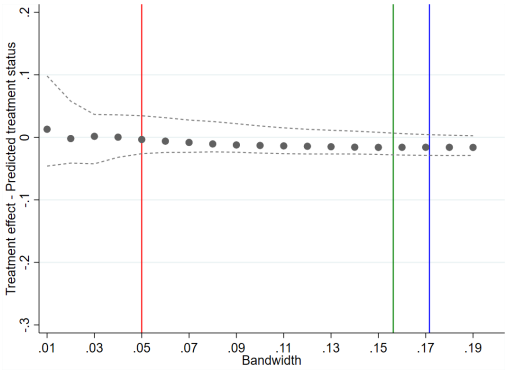
(c) Orientation level



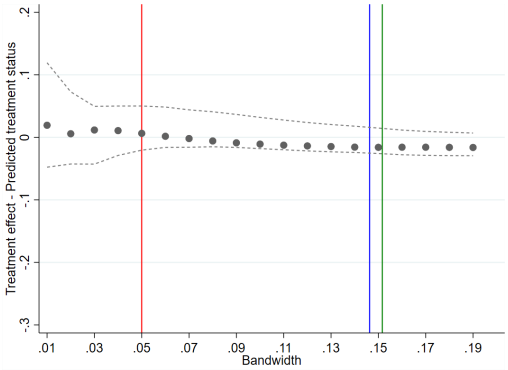
Notes: This figure tests the sensitivity of our main results to bandwidth choice. Dots represent the estimated treatment effect of winning the current election on the probability that the candidate (Figure C.1a), the candidate's party (Figure C.1b), or the candidate's orientation (Figure C.1c) wins the next election, using different bandwidths from 1 to 20 percentage points. The vertical red line corresponds to our fixed five-percentage-point bandwidth while the green and blue lines give the value of the MSERD and IK optimal bandwidths, respectively. In Figure C.1b, we use our party-level sample. In Figure C.1c, we use our orientation-level sample.

Figure C.2: Robustness of general balance test to bandwidth choice

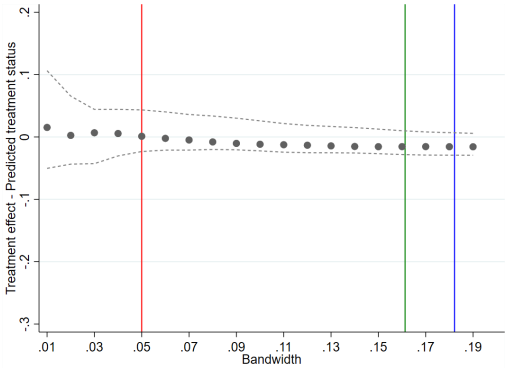
(a) Candidate level



(b) Party level



(c) Orientation level



Notes: This figure tests the sensitivity of our general balance test to bandwidth choice. Dots represent the estimated treatment effect of winning the current election on the predicted treatment status, using different bandwidths from 1 to 20 percentage points. Other notes as in Appendix Figure C.1.

Table C.1: Impact of winning on winning the next election, other bandwidths and polynomial orders

(a) Candidate level

	Cand. wins, t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.276***	0.272***	0.219***	0.268***	0.220***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.033)	(0.016)	(0.034)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	17668	15106	3770	13664	7372
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.137	0.113	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.115	0.122	0.156	0.126	0.148

(b) Party level

	Party wins, t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.164***	0.163***	0.092	0.159***	0.098
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.037)	(0.019)	(0.039)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.207	0.000	0.184
Observations	14623	15266	3015	10856	5850
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.144	0.153	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.222	0.217	0.281	0.243	0.267

(c) Orientation level

	Orient. wins, t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.141***	0.142***	0.093*	0.138***	0.092*
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.037)	(0.019)	(0.038)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.000	0.085
Observations	14856	14119	3354	12171	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.127	0.120	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.320	0.325	0.383	0.338	0.366

Notes: We use the MSERD and IK optimal bandwidths (columns 1 and 2), fixed bandwidths of 2.5 and 10 percentage points (columns 3 and 4), and a polynomial of order 2 (column 5). Other notes as in Table 2.

Table C.2: Impact of winning on winning the next election, controlling for candidates' political orientation

	Cand. wins, t+1	Party wins, t+1	Orient. wins, t+1
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment effect	0.254***	0.140***	0.132***
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.005	0.004
Observations	7364	5850	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1
Bandwidth	0.050	0.050	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.148	0.267	0.366

Notes: We control for five dummies indicating the candidate's orientation from far-left to far-right. The dummy for being non-classified is omitted. Other notes as in Table 2.

Table C.3: Impact of winning on candidate entry in the next election, other bandwidths and polynomial orders

(a) Candidate level

	Cand. runs, t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.338***	0.338***	0.308***	0.331***	0.306***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.034)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	17322	16502	3770	13664	7372
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.134	0.126	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.351	0.354	0.395	0.366	0.390

(b) Party level

	Party runs, t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	0.051***	0.052**	0.026	0.053**	0.026
	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.029)	(0.015)	(0.030)
Robust p-value	0.001	0.016	0.963	0.027	0.784
Observations	14482	11507	3015	10856	5850
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.142	0.107	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	0.783	0.786	0.800	0.787	0.796

(c) Orientation level

	Orient nb. other cand., t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	-0.415***	-0.421***	-0.408***	-0.407***	-0.406***
	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.092)	(0.048)	(0.096)
Robust p-value	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.004
Observations	17844	20318	3354	12171	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.161	0.193	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	1.840	1.837	1.867	1.854	1.854

(d) Orientation level (cont.)

	Orient nb. all cand., t+1				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treatment effect	-0.103***	-0.103***	-0.123	-0.103*	-0.125
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.086)	(0.045)	(0.090)
Robust p-value	0.006	0.032	0.239	0.054	0.372
Observations	19807	20007	3354	12171	6575
Polynomial order	1	1	1	1	2
Bandwidth	0.186	0.189	0.025	0.100	0.050
Mean, left of threshold	2.161	2.161	2.250	2.207	2.230

Notes: Same notes as in Table 3 and Appendix Table C.1.

D Additional Details on the Setting and the Data

D.1 Elections

Our sample contains 20,755 races from both parliamentary and local elections. The distribution of races by election type and election year are shown in Tables D.1 and D.2. Summary statistics for races included in our candidate-level, party-level, and orientation-level samples are shown in Tables D.3 and D.4.

Table D.1: Number of races in parliamentary elections by election year

Election type	Year t (running variable) (1)	Year t+1 (electoral outcomes) (2)	Nb of races (3)
Parliamentary elections	1958	1962	475
	1962	1967	337
	1967	1968	484
	1968	1973	458
	1973	1978	481
	1978	1981	483
	1988	1993	557
	1993	1997	560
	1997	2002	565
	2002	2007	574
	2007	2012	221
	2012	2017	562
Total			5757

Notes: Column 3 indicates the number of races in a given election year (shown in column 1) that were successfully linked to a subsequent race occurring in the same district in the next election year (shown in column 2). We exclude races that cannot be linked to a subsequent election due to redistricting as well as races where the winner ran uncontested.

Table D.2: Number of races in local elections by election year

Election type	Year t (running variable) (1)	Year t+1 (electoral outcomes) (2)	Nb of races (3)
Local elections	1979	1982	62
	1979	1985	937
	1982	1985	42
	1982	1988	1023
	1985	1988	59
	1985	1992	1460
	1988	1992	28
	1988	1994	1574
	1992	1994	28
	1992	1998	1926
	1994	1998	24
	1994	2001	1920
	1998	2001	30
	1998	2004	1951
	2001	2004	16
	2001	2008	1912
	2004	2008	16
	2004	2011	1979
	2008	2011	11
Total			14998

Notes: Same notes as in Table D.1.

Table D.3: Summary statistics

	Mean	Sd	Min	Max	Obs.
A. Candidate-level					
Registered voters	25,043.1	27,541.1	255.0	181,284.0	20,755
Turnout	0.682	0.103	0.134	0.952	20,755
Nb. of cand.	6.1	2.9	2.0	29.0	20,755
Runoff	0.707	0.455	0.000	1.000	20,755
Winning margin	0.206	0.163	0.000	0.999	20,755
B. Party-level					
Registered voters	25,870.6	27,850.8	255.0	181,284.0	19,434
Turnout	0.681	0.103	0.134	0.920	19,434
Nb. of cand.	6.1	3.0	2.0	29.0	19,434
Runoff	0.708	0.455	0.000	1.000	19,434
Winning margin	0.206	0.162	0.000	0.999	19,434
C. Orientation-level					
Registered voters	26,258.3	28,034.5	258.0	181,284.0	18,666
Turnout	0.680	0.103	0.134	0.912	18,666
Nb. of cand.	6.1	3.0	2.0	29.0	18,666
Runoff	0.711	0.453	0.000	1.000	18,666
Winning margin	0.204	0.161	0.000	0.999	18,666

Notes: The unit of observation is the race. In Panel a, we exclude races that cannot be linked to a subsequent election due to redistricting as well as races where the winner runs uncontested. In Panel b, we further exclude races in which none of the top-two contenders is affiliated with one of the seven main party organizations, and races in which the top-two contenders are from the same party. In Panel c, we exclude races in which none of the top-two contenders can be classified on the left-right scale and races in which the top-two contenders are from the same orientation.

Table D.4: Summary statistics for races within the RD bandwidth

	Mean	Sd	Min	Max	Obs.
A. Candidate-level					
Registered voters	29,914.8	29,887.1	258.0	147,636.0	3,686
Turnout	0.687	0.103	0.279	0.906	3,686
Nb. of cand.	6.6	3.1	2.0	27.0	3,686
Runoff	0.992	0.087	0.000	1.000	3,686
Winning margin	0.025	0.014	0.000	0.050	3,686
B. Party-level					
Registered voters	31,167.3	30,135.8	258.0	147,636.0	3,429
Turnout	0.686	0.103	0.279	0.906	3,429
Nb. of cand.	6.7	3.1	2.0	27.0	3,429
Runoff	0.994	0.074	0.000	1.000	3,429
Winning margin	0.025	0.014	0.000	0.050	3,429
C. Orientation-level					
Registered voters	31,663.2	30,382.1	258.0	147,636.0	3,315
Turnout	0.685	0.103	0.279	0.906	3,315
Nb. of cand.	6.7	3.2	2.0	27.0	3,315
Runoff	0.993	0.083	0.000	1.000	3,315
Winning margin	0.025	0.014	0.000	0.050	3,315

Notes: The sample is restricted to races within the 5-percentage-point bandwidth. Other notes as in Appendix Table D.3.

D.2 Party system

Our analysis focuses on the seven main French parties over the last 70 years, labeled as follows (from left to right): FDG, VEC, SOC, RadGauche, MODEM, UMP, FN. FDG refers to the most extreme party on the left – among those in our list. It corresponded to the French Communist Party (FCP) from 1958 to 2007 and included Front de Gauche in 2012. VEC represents the main ecologist party, which started operating in France in 1978. SOC coincides with the different shades of socialist parties that ran for election in France between 1958 and 2012 – namely, the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) in 1958 and 1962, the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS) in 1967 and 1968, the Socialist Party and the Movement of Left Radicals (PSMRG) in 1978, and the Socialist Party (SOC) in 1973 and from 1981 to 2012. RadGauche identifies the radical left, which coincided with the Radicals until 1972 (when the latter party leaned toward the left) and with the Parti Radical de Gauche after the Radicals split between a center-right and a center-left component. MODEM stands for the centrist party, represented by Union for French Democracy

from 1978 to 2002 and by MODEM in 2007 and 2012. Under UMP, we list the right-wing Gaullist parties that ran from 1958 to 2012. The list starts with Union for the New Republic (UNR) founded by De Gaulle's supporters that ran in 1958, the UNR-UDT in 1962, which gathered the UNR and the Gaullist Democratic Union of Labour (UDT), the Union of Democrats for the Fifth Republic (UD5) in 1967, the Union for the Defense of the Republic (UDR) in 1968, the Union of Republicans for Progress (URP) in 1973, the Rally for the Republic (RPR) from 1978 to 1997, and the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire from 2002 to 2012. Finally, FN refers to the Front National, the most extreme party on the right. This party, founded in 1972, has gained more than 10% of the expressed votes in all parliamentary elections since 1988.

While the previous paragraph provides a broad description of the main political parties in our database, the classification we performed was more detailed and complex. In the French political system, it is not rare for national politicians to leave their party and found a new political formation. Similarly, it is common for small parties to merge into larger formations. There exists a clear trade-off between maintaining the precise and granular ideological differences between parties present in a given election year, and identifying parties that remain stable over time. Given the long time span of our sample, we prioritized party consistency, possibly losing some short-term ideological granularity.

Parties were mapped using the following approach: first, whenever a party simply changes its name over time, it is mapped into one of our seven party labels. For instance, the party labels SFIO, FGDS, PS, and SOC all identify the socialist party and are all mapped into the general label SOC. Second, all election-specific party nuances that eventually converge (through mergers) into one of the seven main categories are considered as part of the main category throughout the whole period.

Consider for instance the 1973 election. In this case, the Républicains Indépendants (RI), the Union of Democrats for the Republic (UDR), and the Centre Démocratie et Progrès (CDP) ran independently but under a general coalition named Union des Républicains pour le Progrès. The CDP later merged into the Centre des Démocrates Sociaux which in turn converged into the Force Démocrate, led by François Bayrou, one of the founders of the MODEM. Thus, CDP is classified as MODEM. As for RI, the party was later replaced by the Parti Républicain, which then became Démocratie Libérale (DL), one of the founding components of the UMP. We thus classified RI as

UMP. Finally, the UDR was replaced by the Rassemblement pour la République, the main component of the UMP, and was thus also classified as UMP.

These classifications were performed mainly relying on the work by Knapp (2004) and the information provided in "france-politique.fr". Table D.5 displays the mapping between political labels (present in the electoral results) and party names, political orientations, and a dummy indicating whether the label corresponds to a structured party or independent candidates, for each election separately. Note that the political orientation is from Granzier et al. (2023a).

Table D.5: Party classification and political orientation, by election

1958 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans	UMP	right	1
Centre de la Réforme Républicaine		left	1
Démocratie Chrétienne de France		right	1
Divers Extrême Droite		farright	0
Divers Gaullistes		right	0
Modérés		nonclassified	0
Mouvement Républicain Populaire	MDM	center	1
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Poujadistes	FN	farright	1
Parti Socialiste Autonome		left	1
Radicaux Centristes		center	1
Radicaux Socialistes	RadGauche	left	1
Radicaux - Union des Forces Démocratiques		left	1
Rassemblement des Gauches Républicaines		center	1
Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière	SOC	left	1
UDSR Minoritaires		left	1
Union des Forces Démocratiques		left	1
Union de la Gauche Socialiste		left	1
Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1

1962 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Centre National Des Indépendants Et Paysans	UMP	right	1
Divers Extrême Droite		farright	0
Divers Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Divers Gaullistes		right	0
Indépendants		nonclassified	0
Indépendants - V^{e} République		nonclassified	0
Modérés		nonclassified	0
Mouvement Républicain Populaire	MDM	center	1
Mouvement Républicain Populaire - V^{e} République	MDM	center	1
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Poujadistes	FN	farright	1
Parti Socialiste Unifié		farleft	1
Radicaux centristes		center	1
Radicaux socialistes	RadGauche	left	1
Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Nouvelle République - Union Démocratique du Travail	UMP	right	1

1967 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Alliance Républicaine pour les Libertés et le Progrès		center	1
Apparenté au Parti Communiste Français		left	0
Centre Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Divers Extrême Droite		farright	0
Divers Gaullistes		right	0
Divers Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Modérés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste Unifié		farleft	1
Radicaux de Droite		right	1
Centre Droit Rallié Gaullisme		right	0
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Républicains Indépendants	UMP	right	1
Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1

1968 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Alliance Républicaine		center	1
Parti Communiste Français et apparentés	FDG	left	1
Centre Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Centre Démocrate/Centre Progrès et Démocratie Moderne	MDM	center	1
Centre Progrès et Démocratie Moderne	MDM	center	1
Divers Extrême Droite		farright	0
Divers Gaullistes		right	0
Divers Gaullistes/Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1
Divers Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Indépendants		nonclassified	0
Modérés		nonclassified	0
Modérés/Centre Progrès et Démocratie Moderne		center	1
Modérés/Radicaux Socialistes		left	1
Modérés/Républicains Indépendants		right	1
Mouvement pour la Réforme		center	1
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste Unifié		farleft	1
Radicaux de Droite		right	1
Radicaux de Droite/Républicains Indépendants		right	1
Radicaux Socialistes	RadGauche	left	1
Radicaux Socialistes/Républicains Indépendants		right	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Républicains Indépendants	UMP	right	1
Républicains Indépendants/Divers Gaullistes	UMP	right	1
Républicains Indépendants/Union des Démocrates pour la Ve République	UMP	right	1
Républicains Indépendants/UDR/Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1
Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste	SOC	left	1
Technique et Démocratie		nonclassified	1
Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1

1973 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Centre Démocratie et Progrès	MDM	right	1
Centre Démocratie et Progrès/Union des Républicains de Progrès	MDM	right	1
Divers Gaullistes		right	0
Réformateurs	MDM	center	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Indépendants		nonclassified	0
Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire		farleft	1
Lutte Ouvrière		farleft	1
Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Organisation Communiste Internationale		farleft	1
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste Unifié		farleft	1
Parti Socialiste Unifié - Gauche Sociale Unifié	SOC	left	1
Radicaux Réformateurs	MDM	center	1
Républicains Indépendants	UMP	right	1
Républicains Indépendants/Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1
Union des Démocrates pour la V^{e} République	UMP	right	1
Union des Démocrates pour la V^{e} République/Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1
Union pour la Nouvelle République	UMP	right	1

1978 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Indépendants		nonclassified	0
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste	SOC	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1979 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française		right	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1982 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1981 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Indépendants		nonclassified	0
Non Classés		nonclassified	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste	SOC	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1985 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1988 Parliamentary and local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Front National	FN	farright	1
Majorité Présidentielle		left	0
Parti Communiste Français	FDG	left	1
Parti Socialiste	SOC	left	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Sans Etiquette		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1992 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Génération écologie		nonclassified	1
Autres Majorité Présidentielle		left	0
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

1993 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Génération Écologie		nonclassified	1
Majorité Présidentielle		left	0
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

1994 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Génération Écologie		nonclassified	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

1997 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	nonclassified	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Parti Radical-Socialiste	RadGauche	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1

1998 Local elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Mouvement Républicain et Citoyen		left	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2001 Local elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Chasse Pêche Nature Traditions		right	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Démocratie Libérale		right	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Mouvement Républicain et Citoyen		left	1
Mouvement National Républicain		farright	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la France		right	1
Rassemblement pour la République	UMP	right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	center	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2002 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Chasse Pêche Nature Traditions		right	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Démocratie Libérale		right	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire		farleft	1
Lutte Ouvrière		farleft	1
Mouvement National Républicain		farright	1
Mouvement pour la France		right	1
Pôle Républicain		left	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Rassemblement pour la France		right	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	center	1
Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2004 Local elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Chasse Pêche Nature Traditions		right	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française	MDM	center	1
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2008 Local elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Autres		nonclassified	0
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Majorité présidentielle		right	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française - Mouvement Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2007 Parliamentary elections

Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Chasse Pêche Nature Traditions		right	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Majorité Présidentielle		right	0
Mouvement pour la France		right	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour la Démocratie Française - Mouvement Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2011 Local elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Autres		nonclassified	0
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front National	FN	farright	1
Autres candidats majorité présidentielle		right	1
Majorité présidentielle		right	1
Mouvement Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Parti de Gauche	FDG	left	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2012 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Alliance Centriste		center	1
Autres		nonclassified	0
Le Centre pour la France	MDM	center	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes		nonclassified	0
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
Front de Gauche	FDG	left	1
Front National	FN	farright	1
Nouveau Centre		right	1
Parti radical		right	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	UMP	right	1
Verts	VEC	left	1

2017 Parliamentary elections			
Political label	*Party name*	*Political orientation*	*Party/Independent*
Communiste	FDG	left	1
Divers		nonclassified	0
Debout la France		right	1
Divers Droite		right	0
Divers Gauche		left	0
Écologistes	VEC	left	1
Extrême Droite		farright	0
Extrême Gauche		farleft	0
La France Insoumise		left	1
Front National	FN	farright	1
Les Républicains	UMP	right	1
Mouvement Démocrate	MDM	center	1
Parti Radical de Gauche	RadGauche	left	1
Régionalistes		nonclassified	0
La République en Marche		center	1
Socialistes	SOC	left	1
Union des Démocrates et Indépendants		right	1

Notes: The Political label indicates the label present in the electoral results and attributed by the Ministry of Interior. The Party name indicates how each party label was classified into the seven main French parties. Each party is further classified into six ideological orientations from far-left to far-right (including the residual category "non-classified"), following Granzier et al. (2023a). The final column, Party/Independent, indicates whether the label corresponds to a structured party or independent candidates.

D.3 Electoral coalitions

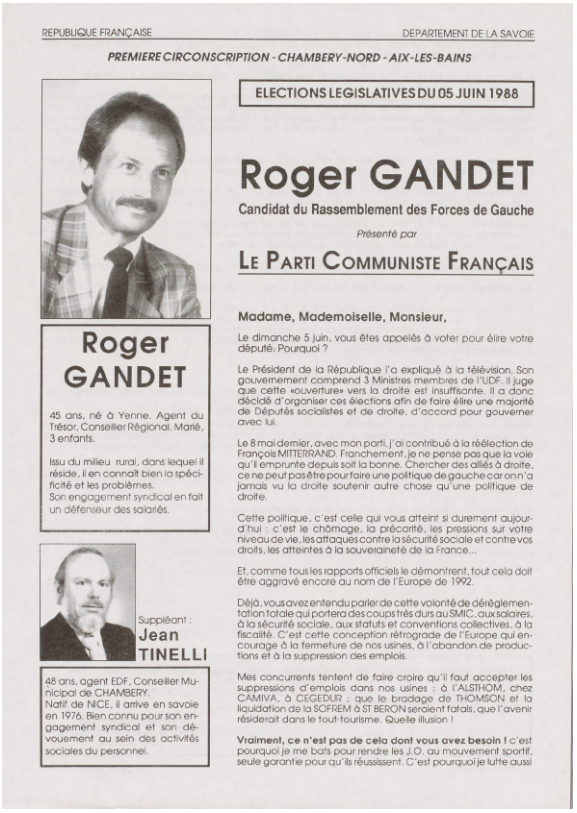
Beside tracking parties over time, we mapped them into national coalitions. The two main coalitions typically gather centre-right and centre-left forces around the UMP on the one hand, and the SOC on the other. These two opposite core parties never belonged to the same coalition. Our approach is thus the following: for each year, we considered a left- and a right-wing coalition formed respectively by the SOC or the UMP and all the parties that signed national-level agreements with them. These agreements may take place either in the first round, when parties avoid to present a candidate in certain districts to increase the chances of victory of their ally, or in the second round, when allied parties sign national agreements to withdraw the least voted candidates and endorse the most voted candidate of the coalition. Information on national alliances is taken from Williams (1970) for the first part of our sample, and from other sources including Knapp (2004), Chabal (2015) and Wikipedia for the second part.

D.4 Campaign manifestos

Two-page campaign manifestos issued by candidates are a key component of French electoral campaigns. In each constituency, all manifestos are mailed to all voters, together with ballots, at most four days before the first round, and three days before the second round in case of a runoff. They allow candidates to tailor their campaign communication to the specific voters in their district. An example is provided in Figure D.1. Candidates are responsible for printing their own manifestos, but this cost is reimbursed by the state if they gather at least 5% of the votes during either round of the election (Electoral law, articles R39 and L216).

Figure D.1: Example of candidate manifesto

(a) First page



REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE — DEPARTEMENT DE LA SAVOIE

PREMIERE CIRCONSCRIPTION - CHAMBERY-NORD - AIX-LES-BAINS

ELECTIONS LEGISLATIVES DU 05 JUIN 1988

Roger GANDET

Candidat du Rassemblement des Forces de Gauche

Présenté par

LE PARTI COMMUNISTE FRANÇAIS

Roger GANDET

45 ans, né à Yenne. Agent du Trésor, Conseiller Régional. Marié, 3 enfants.

Issu du milieu rural, dans lequel il réside, il en connaît bien la spécificité et les problèmes.
Son engagement syndical en fait un défenseur des salariés.

Suppléant : **Jean TINELLI**

48 ans, agent EDF, Conseiller Municipal de CHAMBERY.
Natif de NICE, il arrive en savoie en 1976. Bien connu pour son engagement syndical et son dévouement au sein des activités sociales du personnel.

Madame, Mademoiselle, Monsieur,

Le dimanche 5 juin, vous êtes appelés à voter pour élire votre député. Pourquoi ?

Le Président de la République l'a expliqué à la télévision. Son gouvernement comprend 3 Ministres membres de l'UDF. Il juge que cette «ouverture» vers la droite est insuffisante. Il a donc décidé d'organiser ces élections afin de faire élire une majorité de Députés socialistes et de droite, d'accord pour gouverner avec lui.

Le 8 mai dernier, avec mon parti, j'ai contribué à la réélection de François MITTERRAND. Franchement, je ne pense pas que la voie qu'il emprunte depuis soit la bonne. Chercher des alliés à droite, ce ne peut pas être pour faire une politique de gauche car on n'a jamais vu la droite soutenir autre chose qu'une politique de droite.

Cette politique, c'est celle qui vous atteint si durement aujourd'hui : c'est le chômage, la précarité, les pressions sur votre niveau de vie, les attaques contre la sécurité sociale et contre vos droits, les atteintes à la souveraineté de la France...

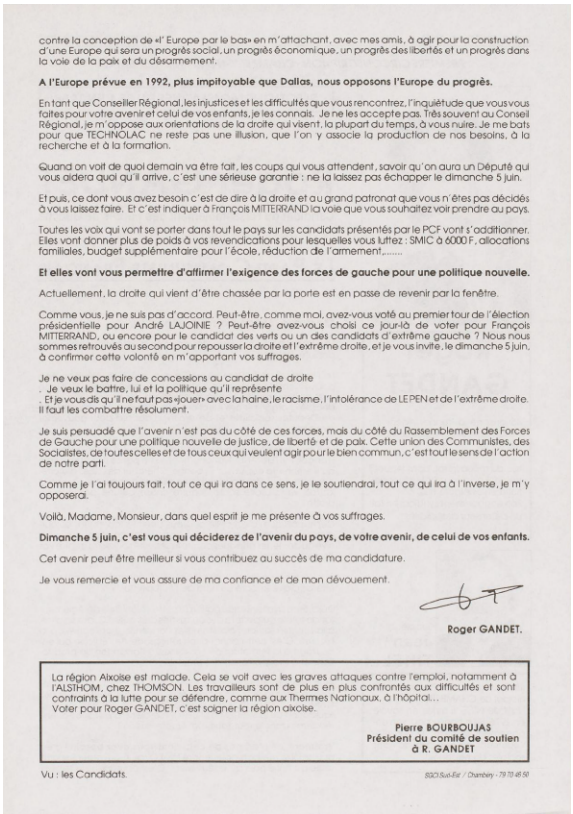
Et, comme tous les rapports officiels le démontrent, tout cela doit être aggravé encore au nom de l'Europe de 1992.

Déjà, vous avez entendu parler de cette volonté de déréglementation totale qui portera des coups très durs au SMIC, aux salaires, à la sécurité sociale, aux statuts et conventions collectives, à la fiscalité. C'est cette conception rétrograde de l'Europe qui encourage à la fermeture de nos usines, à l'abandon de productions et à la suppression des emplois.

Mes concurrents tentent de faire croire qu'il faut accepter les suppressions d'emplois dans nos usines : à l'ALSTHOM, chez CAMIVA, à CEGEDUR ; que le bradage de THOMSON et la liquidation de la SOFREM à ST BERON seraient fatals, que l'avenir résiderait dans le tout-tourisme. Quelle illusion !

Vraiment, ce n'est pas de cela dont vous avez besoin ! c'est pourquoi je me bats pour rendre les J.O. au mouvement sportif, seule garantie pour qu'ils réussissent. C'est pourquoi je lutte aussi

(b) Second page



contre la conception de «l' Europe par le bas» en m'attachant, avec mes amis, à agir pour la construction d'une Europe qui sera un progrès social, un progrès économique, un progrès des libertés et un progrès dans la voie de la paix et du désarmement.

A l'Europe prévue en 1992, plus impitoyable que Dallas, nous opposons l'Europe du progrès.

En tant que Conseiller Régional, les injustices et les difficultés que vous rencontrez, l'inquiétude que vous vous faites pour votre avenir et celui de vos enfants, je les connais. Je ne les accepte pas. Très souvent au Conseil Régional, je m'oppose aux orientations de la droite qui visent, la plupart du temps, à vous nuire. Je me bats pour que TECHNOLAC ne reste pas une illusion, que l'on y associe la production de nos besoins, à la recherche et à la formation.

Quand on voit de quoi demain va être fait, les coups qui vous attendent, savoir qu'on aura un Député qui vous aidera quoi qu'il arrive, c'est une sérieuse garantie : ne la laissez pas échapper le dimanche 5 juin.

Et puis, ce dont vous avez besoin c'est de dire à la droite et au grand patronat que vous n'êtes pas décidés à vous laissez faire. Et c'est indiquer à François MITTERRAND la voie que vous souhaitez voir prendre au pays.

Toutes les voix qui vont se porter dans tout le pays sur les candidats présentés par le PCF vont s'additionner. Elles vont donner plus de poids à vos revendications pour lesquelles vous luttez : SMIC à 6000 F, allocations familiales, budget supplémentaire pour l'école, réduction de l'armement,.....

Et elles vont vous permettre d'affirmer l'exigence des forces de gauche pour une politique nouvelle.

Actuellement, la droite qui vient d'être chassée par la porte est en passe de revenir par la fenêtre.

Comme vous, je ne suis pas d'accord. Peut-être, comme moi, avez-vous voté au premier tour de l'élection présidentielle pour André LAJOINIE ? Peut-être avez-vous choisi ce jour-là de voter pour François MITTERRAND, ou encore pour le candidat des verts ou un des candidats d'extrême gauche ? Nous nous sommes retrouvés au second pour repousser la droite et l'extrême droite, et je vous invite, le dimanche 5 juin, à confirmer cette volonté en m'apportant vos suffrages.

Je ne veux pas faire de concessions au candidat de droite
. Je veux le battre, lui et la politique qu'il représente
. Et je vous dis qu'il ne faut pas «jouer» avec la haine, le racisme, l'intolérance de LEPEN et de l'extrême droite.
Il faut les combattre résolument.

Je suis persuadé que l'avenir n'est pas du côté de ces forces, mais du côté du Rassemblement des Forces de Gauche pour une politique nouvelle de justice, de liberté et de paix. Cette union des Communistes, des Socialistes, de toutes celles et de tous ceux qui veulent agir pour le bien commun, c'est tout le sens de l'action de notre parti.

Comme je l'ai toujours fait, tout ce qui ira dans ce sens, je le soutiendrai, tout ce qui ira à l'inverse, je m'y opposerai.

Voilà, Madame, Monsieur, dans quel esprit je me présente à vos suffrages.

Dimanche 5 juin, c'est vous qui déciderez de l'avenir du pays, de votre avenir, de celui de vos enfants.

Cet avenir peut être meilleur si vous contribuez au succès de ma candidature.

Je vous remercie et vous assure de ma confiance et de mon dévouement.

Roger GANDET.

La région Aixoise est malade. Cela se voit avec les graves attaques contre l'emploi, notamment à l'ALSTHOM, chez THOMSON. Les travailleurs sont de plus en plus confrontés aux difficultés et sont contraints à la lutte pour se défendre, comme aux Thermes Nationaux, à l'hôpital...
Voter pour Roger GANDET, c'est soigner la région aixoise.

Pierre BOURBOUJAS
Président du comité de soutien à R. GANDET

Vu : les Candidats.

Source: Archelec Project (Internet Archive 2019).

We exploit manifestos issued before the first round of nine parliamentary elections: 1962, 1967, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1981, 1993, 1997, and 2017. Manifestos issued before the parliamentary elections held between 1962 and 1993 were systematically collected and digitized by the CEVIPOF and the

Sciences Po Library for the Archelec project (Gaultier-Voituriez 2016). They are available in PDF version and machine-readable text at the following link: https://archive.org/details/archiveselectoralesducevipc We use the dataset assembled by Le Pennec (2024a). Over the corresponding period (i.e., the parliamentary elections from 1962 to 1988), next-election manifestos are available for 92% of the candidates ranked first or second in the decisive stage of the current election who run again in the next election.

Manifestos issued in 1997 were collected from the National Archives by Cagé et al. (2024). For the 1993 parliamentary election, next-election manifestos are available for 95% of the candidates who run again in the next election.

Manifestos issued in 2017 were, in part, made available online by the Ministry of the Interior shortly before the election, scraped by Regards Citoyens (https://www.regardscitoyens.org), and linked to the electoral results by Le Pennec (2024b). For the 2012 parliamentary election, next-election manifestos are available for 75% of the candidates who run again in the next election.

D.5 Similarity between manifestos

Text pre-processing We pre-process the content of candidate manifestos following standard steps in the literature. Specifically, we tokenize documents at the single word level, and remove stopwords and special characters.

Cosine similarity Our first measure of similarity between manifestos relies on a simple bag-of-words approaches. For each election year separately, we represent the corpus of first round manifestos as a document-term matrix, where each manifesto is represented as a vector of word frequencies over the vocabulary (between 4,000 and 6,000 words depending on the year, after excluding words that appear in less than 0.5% of the documents). We then calculate the cosine similarity between any two manifestos (i.e., vectors of word frequencies) issued by candidates from the same party, for each of the seven main parties in our sample. This measure may take any value between -1 and 1, and it indicates how similar two documents are from each other in terms of the words they use, while accounting for differences in length between them. Next, we calculate each manifesto's average pairwise similarity to all other manifestos issued in the same election year by candidates from the same party.

We repeat this exercise for four different vector representations of manifestos: frequencies of unigrams, Tf-Idf weights of unigrams, frequencies or bigrams, and Tf-Idf weights of bigrams. Tf-Idf weights give more weight to document-specific words which are frequent in a given manifesto but infrequent in others.

Latent Semantic Indexing Our second measure of similarity follows Bertrand et al. (2021) and uses Latent Semantic Indexing. We first represent each manifesto as a vector of Tf-Idf weights over the vocabulary. We then apply a singular value decomposition to the large and sparse document-term matrix to reduce its dimensionality and obtain a dense matrix, where each document is represented as a vector of 200 latent dimensions. We measure the cosine similarity between any two such dense vectors, and calculate each manifesto's average pairwise similarity to all other manifestos from the same party x year.

We perform this exercise for two different vector representations of manifestos: Tf-Idf weights of unigrams and Tf-Idf weights of bigrams.

Originality index Taking into account both similarity measures and their different vector representations, we are left with six different measures of a manifesto's mean similarity to other manifestos from the same party x year. We standardize each of these measures by election year. We then define the originality index as the average of these standardized measures. The index is further divided by its standard deviation to facilitate interpretation.

First person and past participles We count the number of first person's personal pronouns ("je" and "j'") in the original text, without removing punctuation nor stop words. To count the number of past participles, we use a part of speech tagging model for French based on the pre-trained BERT model *camembert-base*.[42] This model identifies the function of each word in a sentence (noun, adverb, verb, etc), including past participles.

D.6 Definition of key outcomes

Candidate level To construct candidate-level outcomes, we match candidate names across election years. More precisely, we perform fuzzy string matching on candidates' first names, last

[42] https://huggingface.co/gilf/french-camembert-postag-model

names, and political orientations, and we resolve uncertain matches manually. In parliamentary elections, we match candidates with candidates in the same constituency over the next election cycle. In local elections, we match candidates with candidates in the same canton two cycles later, since cantons elect their council members only every other cycle. A few cantons hold an election in two consecutive cycles, due for instance to the death of the incumbent, in which case we match candidates with candidates in the next cycle. Candidates whose constituency or canton is redistricted before the next election cycle are left unmatched.

Our key candidate-level outcomes are defined as follows:

- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate runs again and wins the next election, and equal to 0 if the candidate does not run again or runs and does not win. This outcome, like all subsequent ones, is set to missing for candidates whose district is redistricted before the next election.
- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate runs again in the next election.
- The candidate's vote share in the first round of the next election. It is measured in percentage points, relative to the number of expressed votes (cast votes which are neither null nor blank), and set to 0 if the candidate does not run again.
- The candidate's total campaign expenditures and total contributions received for the next election. These quantities are measured in euros and set to 0 for candidates who do not run in the next election, when estimating bounds on the effect of winning on these outcomes.
- The candidate's originality index (as defined in Section D.5) in the next election. It is set to 0 for candidates who do not run in the next election, when estimating bounds on the effect of winning on this outcome.
- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate qualifies for the runoff in the next election: they are either among the top-two candidates, in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold, or their vote share is above the qualification threshold, in other races. This outcome is set to 0 if the candidate does not run again, and it is defined whether a runoff election is held or not.

Party level To construct party-level outcomes, we use the party classification described in Appendix D.2. We restrict the sample to candidates affiliated with one of the seven main parties and aggregate, in each district, candidate-level variables at the party level. We then link each candidate to the corresponding party-level outcomes in the next election.

Our key party-level outcomes are defined as follows:

- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's party runs again and wins the next election (regardless of whether the candidate themselves runs and wins the next election), and equal to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's party runs again or if some candidate runs but does not win. This outcome, like all subsequent ones, is set to missing for candidates whose district is redistricted before the next election, candidates who are not affiliated with any of the seven main parties, and candidates facing a contender from the same party.
- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's party runs again in the next election.
- The vote share of the candidate's party in the first round of the next election. It is defined as the sum of vote shares received by all candidates from the candidate's party running in the same district, and measured in percentage points, relative to the number of expressed votes. It is set to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's party runs again.
- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's party qualifies for the runoff in the next election. This outcome is set to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's party runs again.

Orientation level We classify candidates between six political orientations (far-left, left, center, right, far-right, and other), using political labels provided for each candidate by the Ministry of the Interior and following Granzier et al. (2023a). Unlike the seven party labels, the orientation is defined for *all* candidates – with the exception of a few candidates with a missing label. In particular, the orientation is also defined for independent candidates who are not affiliated with any party, but who were assigned a label reflecting their ideological leaning (e.g., "divers droite" for right-wing independent candidates). Candidates who cannot be classified on the left-right scale are labeled as "non-classified". We exclude such candidates and aggregate candidate-level

variables at the orientation level in each district, for the five well-defined orientations. We then link each candidate to the corresponding orientation-level outcomes in the next election.

Our key orientation-level outcomes are defined as follows:

- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's orientation runs again and wins the next election (regardless of whether the candidate themselves runs and wins the next election), and equal to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's orientation runs again or if some candidate runs but does not win. This outcome, like all subsequent ones, is set to missing for candidates whose district is redistricted before the next election and for candidates classified as "other." It is also set to missing for candidates facing a contender from the same orientation.

- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's orientation runs again in the next election.

- The vote share of the candidate's orientation in the first round of the next election. It is measured in percentage points, relative to the number of expressed votes, and set to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's orientation runs again.

- The number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation in the next election. It is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation in the next election if the candidate does not run again or if they run again but with another orientation. Conversely, it is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation minus one if the candidate runs again and with the same orientation.

- The number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation that are affiliated with a party, in the next election. It is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation that are affiliated with a party if the candidate does not run again, or if they run again but with another orientation, or if they run again and with the same orientation but without a party affiliation. Conversely, it is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation that are affiliated with a party minus one if the candidate runs again, with the same orientation, and with a party affiliation.

- The number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation that are not affiliated with a party, in the next election.

D.7 Balance test covariates

To run the general balance test shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, we predict treatment assignment by regressing a dummy equal to 1 if the candidate wins on the following covariates, and use the fitted values as outcome in the RDD:

- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate is a woman.
- A set of six dummies indicating the candidate's orientation: far-left, left, center, right, far-right, non-classified.
- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate is affiliated with a party vs. an independent.
- The number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation in the current election. It is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation minus one.
- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate already ran and won the previous election, and equal to 0 if the candidate did not previously run or ran and did not win. This covariate, like all subsequent ones, is set to missing for candidates whose district was redistricted after the previous election.
- A dummy equal to 1 if the candidate already ran in the previous election.
- The candidate's vote share in the first round of the previous election. It is measured in percentage points, relative to the number of expressed votes, and set to 0 if the candidate did not run previously.
- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's party already ran and won the previous election, and equal to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's party previously ran or if some candidate ran but did not win.
- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's party already ran in the previous election.
- The vote share of the candidate's party in the first round of the previous election. It is defined as the sum of vote shares received by all candidates from the candidate's party running in

the same district, and measured in percentage points, relative to the number of expressed votes. It is set to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's party previously ran.

- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's orientation already ran and won the previous election, and equal to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's orientation previously ran or if some candidate ran but did not win.
- A dummy equal to 1 if any candidate from the candidate's orientation already ran in the previous election.
- The vote share of the candidate's orientation in the first round of the previous election. It is defined as the sum of vote shares received by all candidates from the candidate's orientation running in the same district, and measured in percentage points, relative to the number of cast votes. It is set to 0 if no candidate from the candidate's orientation previously ran.
- The number of other candidates from the candidate's orientation in the previous election. It is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation in the previous election if the candidate did not previously run or if they ran but with another orientation. Conversely, it is equal to the total number of candidates from that orientation minus one if the candidate previously ran and with the same orientation.

E Bounds on Treatment Effect Conditional on Running Again

This section describes in detail how we estimate bounds on the treatment impact of winning at t, conditional on running again at t+1.

Following Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) and Granzier et al. (2023a), let T be an indicator equal to 1 if the candidate wins the current election and R_1 and R_0 dummy variables taking value 1 when the candidate runs in the next election after winning $(T = 1)$ and losing $(T = 0)$, respectively. For simplicity, we drop the implicit t subscript from the T dummy, and the implicit $t + 1$ subscript from the R and W dummies. Note that the data only allow us to observe $R = TR_1 + (1-T)R_0$ but not both potential outcomes R_0 and R_1: We may observe a candidate's decision to run again after winning the current election but we cannot determine whether they would have run had they lost instead, and conversely. Analogously, we define W_1 and W_0 as potential indicators taking value 1 if the candidate wins conditional on running in the next election when $T = 1$ and $T = 0$, respectively. The same logic implies that only $W = R\,(TW_1 + (1-T)W_0)$ is observable in the dataset. When the candidate is absent from the next election $(R = 0)$, they loose $(W = 0)$ and the outcome that would have occurred had they decided to run $(R = 1)$ is unknown. Likewise, among candidates who run again $(R = 1)$, we observe whether the current winner wins the next election, but not whether they would have won the next election had they lost the current election, and conversely.

This formulation yields four compliance strata in the sample: the "always-takers" that run in the next election irrespective of their current performance; the "never takers" that never run again (and never win again either); the "compliers" that only run again if they win the current election; and the "defiers" that only run again when they lose the current election. We rule out the presence of defiers by imposing the monotonicity condition that no candidate is less likely to run again after winning than after losing: $R_1 \geq R_0$. Under this assumption, the following decomposition holds:

$$E[W_1 - W_0|Marg = 0, R_1 = 1] = \frac{1}{\underbrace{E[R_1|Marg = 0]}_{\lim_{Marg\downarrow 0} E[R|Marg]}} (\underbrace{E(W_1R_1 - W_0R_0|Marg = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on W}}$$
$$- \underbrace{P(R_1 > R_0|Marg = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on R}} \underbrace{E(W_0|Marg = 0, R_1 > R_0)}_{\text{Unobservable}})$$

The left-hand side of this equation is the quantity that we seek to measure: the effect of winning on winning the next election, conditional on running (i.e., conditional on being an always-taker or a complier). The first term present on the right-hand side, $E[R_1|Marg = 0]$, is the probability of running again for close winners at the cutoff. The second term, $E(W_1R_1 - W_0R_0|Marg = 0)$, is the unconditional effect of winning on the probability of winning the next election, which we estimate in Section 4.1 (25.1 percentage points, as shown in column 1 of Table 2). The third term, $P(R_1 > R_0|Marg = 0)$, denotes the share of compliers at the cutoff. It corresponds to the effect of winning on the probability of running again, which we estimate in Section 4.2 (32.9 percentage points, as shown in column 1 of Table 3). All three quantities can be recovered from the data, but the fourth term, $E(W_0|Marg = 0, R_1 > R_0)$, cannot. It corresponds to the likelihood that compliers who lost the present election (and, therefore, did not compete in the next one) would have won the next election, had they run again. Since compliers never run again after losing, by definition, this term is never observed. Therefore, we need to make assumptions on its size to derive bounds on the left-hand side variable.

To determine which value of the unobserved term would yield a null effect of winning the next election conditional on running again, we can set the left-hand side of the equation equal to zero (i.e., $E[W_1 - W_0|Marg = 0, R_1 = 1] = 0$). This gives us the following equality:

$$\underbrace{E(W_0|Marg = 0, R_1 > R_0)}_{\text{Unobservable}} = \frac{\underbrace{E(W_1R_1 - W_0R_0|Marg = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on W}}}{\underbrace{P(R_1 > R_0|Marg = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on R}}} = \frac{0.251}{0.329} = 0.763$$

Number of competitors from the same orientation We build on the strategy described above to derive bounds on the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election, conditional on running again. Note that this outcome differs from other outcomes like winning, since the effect of a current victory on the number of candidates from the same orientation is not necessarily null for never-takers: even if they do not run again, winning the current election may affect the number of ideologically-close candidates who enter the race in the next election.

Using similar notation, we denote N_0^R and N_1^R as the potential number of other candidates from the same orientation *when the candidate runs again* (after having lost or won, respectively),

and we denote N_0 and N_1 as the potential number of candidates from the same orientation when the candidate does not run again. The number of other candidates from the same orientation can be written as:

$$N = T\left(R_1 N_1^R + (1-R_1)N_1\right) + (1-T)\left(R_0 N_0^R + (1-R_0)N_0\right)$$

The unconditional RD effect can be written as:

$$\begin{aligned} E[R_1 N_1^R + (1-R_1)N_1 - \left(R_0 N_0^R + (1-R_0)N_0\right)|Marg=0] = & \underbrace{E[N_1^R - N_0^R|Marg=0, R_0=R_1=1]}_{always-takers} \\ & + \underbrace{E[N_1^R - N_0|Marg=0, R_1>R_0]}_{compliers} \\ & + \underbrace{E[N_1 - N_0|Marg=0, R_0=R_1=0]}_{never-takers} \end{aligned}$$

where we use the assumption of no defiers.

Noting that

$$\begin{aligned} E[N_1^R - N_0^R|Marg=0, R_1=1] = \frac{1}{E[R_1|Marg=0]}(& E[N_1^R - N_0^R|Marg=0, R_1=R_0=1]P(R_0=R_1=1) \\ & + E[N_1^R - N_0^R|Marg=0, R_1>R_0]P(R_1>R_0)) \end{aligned}$$

and that

$$\begin{aligned} E[N_0|Marg=0, R_0=0] = \frac{1}{1-E[R_0|Marg=0]}(& E[N_0|Marg=0, R_1=R_0=0]P(R_0=R_1=0) \\ & + E[N_0|Marg=0, R_1>R_0]P(R_1>R_0)) \end{aligned}$$

and rearranging terms, we obtain the following equality:

$$E[N_1^R - N_0^R | Marg = 0, R_1 = 1] = \frac{1}{\underbrace{E[R_1|Marg=0]}_{\lim_{Marg\downarrow 0} E[R|Marg]}} (\underbrace{E[N_0|Marg=0, R_0=0]}_{\lim_{Marg\uparrow 0} E[N|Marg,R=0]} (1 - \underbrace{E[R_0|Marg=0]}_{\lim_{Marg\uparrow 0} E[R|Marg]})$$

$$- \underbrace{E[N_1|Marg=0, R_1=R_0=0]}_{\lim_{Marg\downarrow 0} E[N|Marg,R=0]} (1 - \underbrace{E[R_1|Marg=0]}_{\lim_{Marg\downarrow 0} E[R|Marg]})$$

$$+ \underbrace{E[R_1 N_1^R + (1-R_1)N_1 - \left(R_0 N_0^R + (1-R_0)N_0\right) | Marg = 0]}_{\text{RD effect on N}}$$

$$- \underbrace{P(R_1 > R_0 | Marg = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on R}} \underbrace{E(N_0^R | Marg = 0, R_1 > R_0))}_{\text{Unobservable}}$$

The unobservable term in this equation corresponds to the expected number of other candidates from the same orientation as a losing complier in the next race, if they had run. To calculate the lower (most negative) bound for the left-hand side quantity, we assume that this unobservable term is equal to the number of candidates from the same orientation as losing candidates who do not run again in the future (i.e., compliers and never-takers). This quantity is equal to 2.3. To calculate the upper (least negative) bound, we assume that a losing complier who would have run again would have discouraged and "replaced" one of their ideologically-close opponents. We therefore set their unobserved number of opponents from the same orientation, had they run, as equal to 2.3-1=1.3.

Contribution to the overall effect of winning Using the notation introduced above, we can define the share of the overall effect of winning on winning again that is explained by the effect of winning on the number of competitors from the same orientation in the next election, conditional on running again, as:

$$\frac{1}{E(W_1 R_1 - W_0 R_0 | Marg = 0)} \times P[R_1 = 1 | Marg = 0] \times E[N_1^R - N_0^R | Marg = 0, R_1 = 1] \times \delta$$

where $E(W_1 R_1 - W_0 R_0 | Marg = 0)$ is the unconditional effect of winning on winning again (25.1 percentage points, as shown in column 1 of Table 2); $P[R_1 = 1 | Marg = 0] = E[R_1 | Marg = 0]$ is the probability of running again for close winners at the cutoff (74.2 percentage points); $E[N_1^R - N_0^R | Marg = 0, R_1 = 1]$ is the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same

orientation when the candidate runs again (between -0.545 and -0.116, column 3 of Table 4); and δ is the causal effect of the number of other candidates from the same orientation on winning.

We do not observe this last term and we cannot credibly estimate it in our empirical setting, since we do not have exogenous variation in the number of competitors from the same orientation who enter the next race. Instead, we rely on Pons and Tricaud (2018), who estimate the impact of the entry of a third candidate in the runoff of two-round elections on the probability that the ideologically closest candidate wins the election. The advantage of that estimate is that it is obtained in a subset of the races that constitute the sample of our paper: races in which the third candidate in the first round either qualified for the runoff or failed to qualify by a few votes, from parliamentary elections held between 1978 and 2012 as well as local elections held in 2011 and 2015. In Pons and Tricaud (2018), Figure 5 and Table VII show that a candidate's probability of winning in the second round is reduced by 19.2 percentage points when an ideologically-close opponent is also present in that round (vs. not present). Importantly, Pons and Tricaud (2018) estimate the effect of facing an ideologically-close opponent in the second round, whereas δ corresponds to the effect of facing one less opponent of the same orientation in the first round. While the magnitude of these two effects may differ, it is difficult to know which one should be expected to be larger. On the one hand, a third candidate can only qualify for the runoff if their first-round vote share is above a certain threshold. Such candidates may thus be more likely to steal votes from their second-round competitors than the average first-round candidate, in which case δ may be lower than 0.192. On the other hand, Pons and Tricaud (2018) provide an estimate for the impact of facing an opponent that is ideologically close, but not from the same orientation – e.g., the impact of the presence in the runoff of a far-right candidate on the probability that their right-wing competitor wins the election. Since a competitor from the exact same orientation is more likely to steal a candidate's votes than a competitor who is from a different orientation, δ may be larger than 0.192.

Keeping these limitations in mind, and using the estimate from Pons and Tricaud (2018) as our proxy for δ, we obtain that the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation explains between 0.742*0.116*0.192/0.251 = 7% (considering the upper bound for the effect of winning on the number of other candidates from the same orientation in the next election, conditional on running) and 0.742*0.545*0.192/0.251 = 31% (considering the lower bound instead) of the overall effect of winning on winning again.

F Focal Point Effects

Sample Our sample for the candidate-level runoff analysis excludes races that cannot be linked to a subsequent election due to redistricting as well as races with fewer than three candidates and races in which either the second- and third-ranked candidates are ex-aequo or the third- and fourth-ranked candidates are ex-aequo. Our party-level runoff sample further excludes candidates who are not affiliated with any of the seven main party organizations and those who are facing a third- or second-ranked candidate from the same party (in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold). Our orientation-level runoff sample excludes candidates who cannot be classified on the left-right scale and those who are facing a third- or second-ranked candidate from the same orientation (in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold).

Identification assumption As in Section 3, we run multiple tests to check the validity of our RDD approach. First, Appendix Figure B.3 shows no significant discontinuity in the density of the running variable at the threshold, for any of our three levels of analysis – candidate, party or orientation. Second, Appendix Figure B.4 and Appendix Table B.2 show no discontinuous jump in predicted treatment assignment at the threshold. The outcome is constructed from regressing an indicator equal to one if the candidate qualifies to the runoff (i.e., our treatment variable) on all regressors listed in Section 3.2.

Heterogeneity As shown in Appendix Tables A.7 and A.8, the future effects of qualification are mostly driven by the qualification of second-ranked candidates (in races where the second-ranked candidate does not pass the qualification threshold) as opposed to the qualification of third-ranked candidates (in races where the second-ranked candidate passes the qualification threshold). A possible interpretation is that candidates draw more attention and that they are more likely to become focal points when fewer of them qualified for the second round

Interestingly, Appendix Tables A.12 and A.13 show that the positive effects of runoff qualification on electoral success are primarily driven by candidates who barely qualify for a runoff against higher-ranked candidates of a *different* orientation. In particular, the effect on the likelihood that

a candidate wins the next election is 2.4 percentage points in that case, which is at the margin of statistical significance with a robust p-value of 0.10 (Appendix Table A.12, Panel b, column 1). The corresponding estimate for candidates who qualify for runoffs in which they will compete against at least one candidate of the *same* orientation is null (Appendix Table A.12, Panel a, column 1). In addition, the lower bounds on the effects of runoff qualification on vote shares and qualification for the runoff in the next election, conditional on running again, are quite large and significant at the 5% level for candidates who qualify against runoff opponents of a different orientation, but small and non-significant for candidates who qualify against opponents from the same orientation (Appendix A.13, columns 2 and 3). These results suggest that qualifying for the runoff only really benefits candidates who do not have to share their increased visibility with a close competitor from the same orientation, and further highlight the importance of focal point effects.