

Hybrid Electoral Systems: Strategic Replacements and Popular Support

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Abstract

In recent decades, many non-democratic countries introduced local elections in the light of public pressure. However, fear of competition encouraged some non-democratic federal governments to incorporate centralized appointments into the electoral system. Using a game-theoretic model, I describe a previously unexamined procedure that combines appointments and elections. I show that this hybrid institution, currently employed in a number of authoritarian regimes, has counterintuitive implications for the voter's behavior and the government's conduct. In particular, I demonstrate that this institution encourages the population that might not approve of the regime to support pro-regime incumbents.[‡]

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1 Introduction

In recent decades, many non-democratic countries introduced local elections. Some in response to pressure from their populations’ protests or in pursuit of international legitimacy (Levitsky and Way, 2002); some to co-opt elites (Magaloni, 2006; Boix and Svoboda, 2013); others to estimate the level of social discontent (Miller, 2015; Gandhi, 2008; Martinez-Bravo et al., 2011) or to promote popularity (Rozenas, 2016; Egorov and Sonin, 2014) or the strength of their regime (Simpser, 2013; Little et al., 2012, 2015; Przeworski, 2009).

Democratic and fair elections are always praised as they grant the population a *formal* right to hold policymakers accountable. Elections allow voters to punish politicians for performing poorly (Ferejohn, 1986; Manin, 1997), help improve the selection of higher type politicians to office, or do both (Fearon, 1999; Ashworth et al., 2017; Martinez-Bravo et al., 2017). By contrast, non-democratic appointment systems are criticized since central governments’ interventions effectively do away with officials’ accountability to voters and create perverse incentives for local office-holders (Malesky and Schuler, 2010), and can aggravate the competence-loyalty trade-off (Egorov and Sonin, 2011; Harasymiw, 1984).

However, the above dichotomy is not exhaustive: Among non-democratic governments’ routine tools are various “hybrid” procedures that combine elections and appointments. In this paper, I study the normative properties of a system that grants the central government full discretion to replace elected local incumbents and fill vacancies until the forthcoming election. I demonstrate that this “hybrid” institution, although allows for accountability to voters, also incentivizes the population that otherwise might oppose the government to endorse pro-regime (government co-partisan) officials, and, as a result, promotes the regime’s persistence. In addition, I argue that the interventions by the government restrained by the forthcoming elections can benefit voters and study how clarity of information and electoral transparency affect the government’s conduct.

Though the properties of the institution that I study are new to the literature, similar procedures are standard in many non-democratic countries. For instance, per federal legis-

lation in Russia president has the authority to oust elected governors¹ and the discretion to choose her temporary replacement. In Turkey, the Interior Ministry can replace mayors and appoint trustees (*kayyum*) as temporary office-holders until the forthcoming elections. In Venezuela, where the central government frequently ousts district mayors, the government-controlled Municipal Council (*Concejo Municipal*) can appoint an interim office-holder to fill vacancies until the next election.

Indeed, non-democratic governments frequently use these powers and replace elected office-holders. Between 2014 and 2019, the Turkish Interior Ministry ousted 99 mayors – many on terrorism and corruption charges – and appointed temporary replacements. In Russia, massive gubernatorial replacements occur every year, with the central government forcing the governors to resign and president filling vacancies with temporary appointees. In 2017, to take an example, 21 out of 85 governors resigned,² 11 presidential appointees to replace them competed in the special “snap” elections in the same year, and the rest participated in the elections a year later. Importantly for the formal analysis in this paper, the desire to force political opponents out of office did not drive waves of reshuffles: the majority of the replaced governors belonged to the government party.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. I start with a baseline model where I assume that the information available to the voter and the government regarding local officials’ qualifications is symmetric, the election is fair, and the replacements are costless. I study the implications of the government’s bias and information clarity on voter welfare and the government’s conduct. I demonstrate that as the government’s bias increases so do the voter’s incentives to support pro-regime candidates. I, then, relax baseline assumptions and show that electoral unfairness and high replacement costs not only worsen the voter’s utility but also aggravate the voter’s incentives to ex-ante embrace pro-regime officials.

¹In Russia, a *governor* is the highest official figure in a subject (territory, region, autonomous region, city) of the Russian Federation. Each governor heads the executive branch in the subject.

²Then head of the Udmurt Republic, Alexander Solovyov, was expelled “in connection with a loss of trust.”

2 Literature Review

This paper connects with several literatures that study weakening of the formal institution of elections.

First, this paper proposes a new explanation of popular support for non-democratic regimes. The most common and promising explanations of this phenomenon include: (i) Control of information: either low political awareness in the population (Geddes and Zaller, 1989) or strict government control over the media and educational system (Kennedy, 2009); (ii) Electoral unfairness: non-democratic governments can resort to violence to either deter opposition candidates (Levitsky and Way, 2010) or opposition voters. In this paper, I contribute to this empirical literature and demonstrate that even when information is symmetric and elections are fair, the voter might favor pro-regime candidates conditional on the (potential) forthcoming government’s interventions.

Second, this paper contributes to the literature on the persistence of political systems. Extensive empirical scholarship highlights the remarkable robustness of non-democratic regimes (Bunce and Wolchik, 2010; Geddes et al., 2014; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Gerschewski, 2013). This project further explores the extent of institutions’ impact on regimes’ sustainability. It suggests that even a minor change in the existing electoral procedures might bolster the regime’s stability and repel the regime’s change.

Third, in this paper I show that under certain conditions the voter will favor the government’s interventions as it improves electoral selection. Substantively, I demonstrate that the voter *can* benefit from lower formal electoral accountability. Among many (empirical and theoretical) papers that study electoral accountability, some acknowledge potential welfare improving effect of lower accountability: Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2014), Snyder Jr and Strömberg (2010), Canes-Wrone et al. (2001), Ferraz and Finan (2011) demonstrate that higher voter’s awareness of the officials’ conduct create perverse incentives to office-holders and might worsen electoral selection; Ashworth et al. (2017) and Landa and Le Bihan (2018) show that more demanding retention decisions can result in lower voter welfare; finally, Gor-

don et al. (2007) and Gordon and Huber (2007) show that although low barriers to entry in an electoral race boosts the competition, they might worsen the electoral selection, as they distort voters' incentives to become politically informed and encourage the incumbent to conceal her type.

Finally, although there is a vast literature that studies the implications of constitutional differences, existing work juxtaposes the elected officials to the appointed ones and does not examine aftermath of the hybrid institutions. Klein et al. (1997) and Besley and Coate (2003), for example, demonstrate that elected regulators and commissioners tend to be more pro-consumer than appointed ones. Bohn and Inman (1996) explore heterogeneity in behavior of the elected and appointed judges in the state court and show that the former's harshness tends to strongly correlate with their constituents' political ideology. Hanssen (1999) shows that judicial independence results in lower predictability of the judicial decision making and, as a result, more litigation in state courts. In this paper I examine institution that combines elements of electoral and appointment systems and study its impact on voter welfare.

3 Baseline Model

My baseline model is a two-period game between a central government (*it*) and a representative voter (*she*). There is also a pool of *potential* local officials (each *he*). Among them: a current office-holder (the incumbent, I), a temporary official selected by the government (the appointee, A), and the official to compete with either incumbent or, if the incumbent is replaced, the appointee in the forthcoming election (the challenger, C). Every potential candidate in the election has a political party affiliation; he either belongs to the opposition or is the central government's co-partisan. I assume that in every election a co-partisan runs against an opposition candidate. Every potential official is a non-strategic technocrat of qualification θ . Qualifications of all potential local officials are independent draws from a normal distribution, $\theta \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$.

The co-partisanship of every local office-holder is known. However, the government and the voter do not know the *qualifications* of the local officials. Instead, the voter and the government observe a signal s about competence θ of a local official who takes office. I refer to this signal as the official's performance. I assume that every signal s is a sum of the official's qualifications and some random shock ε : $s = \theta + \varepsilon$. Random shocks ε are also independent draws from a normal distribution $\varepsilon \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1/q)$; therefore, s is an unbiased signal of the official's competence.

Variable $q \in \mathcal{R}^+$ determines how much the government and the voter learn about the local official's qualifications from the signal they observe. This variable allows for broad interpretation. For instance, q can stand for level of media transparency: The government's suppression of media freedom can lower awareness of the legislator's incompetence (Egorov et al., 2009; Besley and Prat, 2006). Alternatively, q can indicate the local official's decision-making independence. If the federal law imposes hard budget constraints and tightly controls resource allocation, it limits information value of the officials' performance.

To account for the potential difference in information available to the voter about the elected incumbent's type and the selected appointee's, I assume that the voter learns about the appointee's performance with probability $p \in [0.5, 1]$.³ With complementary probability, she observes nothing.

The sequence of events is as follows.

Timing:

1. Nature determines the random shocks $(\varepsilon_I, \varepsilon_A, \varepsilon_C, \varepsilon_E)$ and the qualifications of all (potential) local officials: the incumbent (θ_I) , the appointee (θ_A) , and the challenger (θ_C)
2. The government and the voter observe $s_I = \theta_I + \varepsilon_I$. The government decides whether to retain the incumbent ($R = 1$) or replace him ($R = 0$)

³I assume $p \in [0.5, 1]$ WLOG. See Appendix C for $p \in [0, 1]$.

3. If the government replaces the incumbent, with probability p the voter sees a signal about the selected appointee's qualification: $s_A^V = \theta_A + \varepsilon_A$. With complementary probability the voter observes no signal: $s_A^V = \emptyset$
4. The voter decides whether to return the current local office-holder (the incumbent or the appointee, $C = 0$) to office or to elect a challenger ($C = 1$)
5. The elected local official produces a policy: $s_E = \theta_E + \varepsilon_E$, where $\theta_E \in \{\theta_C, \theta_I, \theta_A\}$ is the qualification of the elected legislator

Payoffs:

The voter values the policy outcome that the elected candidate implements. The voter's utility is as follows:

$$U_V(C) = \theta_E + \varepsilon_E. \quad (1)$$

The government values the policy outcome: the local official's inferior performance may lower citizen satisfaction, which can trigger popular discontent. The government also benefits if a *co-partisan* assumes local office: local co-partisans help the central government mobilize electoral support (Hale, 2003), deter potential challengers of the regime (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2002), to commit electoral fraud, if needed (Magaloni, 2010) and convince the public of the government's competence (Guriev and Treisman, 2015). The government's utility is:

$$U_G(R) = \theta_E + \varepsilon_E + B \times \mathbf{1}\{\text{Co-partisan Official}\}, \quad (2)$$

where value B stands for a *co-partisanship benefit* and captures how much the government values partisanship of the elected official over the population satisfaction.

In what follows, I refer to the official as *high-performing* (*low-performing*) if the signal about his qualification exceeds (is lower than) the average qualification of the candidates.

3.1 Equilibria

I solve for perfect Bayesian equilibria. Every equilibrium consist of (i) a mapping from the incumbent's performance s_I to the government's decision to replace: $s_I \rightarrow \Delta\{0, 1\}$ that is sequentially rational given the voter's strategy, (ii) a mapping from the current office-holder's performance s_I or s_A^V to the voter's electoral choice: $\{s_I \oplus s_A^V\} \rightarrow \Delta\{0, 1\}$.

The Voter

The voter acts last and decides whom to elect. The baseline model is a game of incomplete symmetric information, thus, the government's actions do not affect the voter's information set. The voter makes her decision based on the signals (s_I and s_A^V) she observes.

If she learns the office-holder's performance, she returns him to office if and only if the official's expected qualification exceeds the average of the candidates' pool. Because s_j is an unbiased signal of the official's qualification, the voter follows a cut-off strategy and elects the challenger iff the current office-holder is low-performing ($s_j < 0$, where $j \in \{I, A\}$).

Remark 1. *In all equilibria, the voter returns high-performing office-holders to office and replaces low-performing office-holders.*

Conditional on the voter's lack of information about the appointee's performance ($s_A^V = \emptyset$), the voter is indifferent between returning the appointee to office and ousting him.⁴ Let us denote probability that the voter returns the appointee she learns nothing about to office as β .⁵

⁴The voter's indifference gives rise to multiple sequential equilibria. This paper analyses the class of equilibria. For formal equilibrium selection criteria see supporting information Appendix D. Importantly, the voter's actions do not affect the predictions of the model (Fearon, 1999).

⁵The voter's strategy can depend on the incumbent's partisanship. When necessary, I denote probability that the voter returns the appointee she learns nothing when the incumbent belongs to the opposition as β_O , and when the incumbent is co-partisan as β_L .

The Government

The government knows the incumbent's performance s_I but not the incumbent's qualification θ_I . The government decides whether to replace the incumbent and, if so, selects either a co-partisan appointee or an opposition appointee. The government's strategy depends on a signal about the incumbent's type (s_I), a co-partisanship benefit (B), and the party affiliation of the incumbent.

Unbiased Government

Let us first assume that the government does not receive a co-partisanship benefit (B). In what follows, I refer to such government as *unbiased*. The unbiased government maximizes the expected winner's qualification. It replaces the incumbent if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned} p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0]E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) \\ > \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times E[\theta_I|s_I] + \mathbf{1}[s_I < 0] \times E[\theta_C]. \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

The LHS of inequality (3) shows the government's expected utility if it decides to replace the incumbent with the appointee. Notice, that the government does not observe the appointee's qualification prior to the replacement and relies on the voter to oust the low-performing appointee. The RHS of inequality (3) shows the government's expected utility if it retains the incumbent.

When the government is unbiased, its strategy satisfies the *monotonicity* property in equilibrium (see Appendix A): if the government retains some incumbent, it also keeps every incumbent who performs better than him. If the government replaces some incumbent, it also replaces every official who performs worse than him. In equilibrium, the unbiased government follows an interior switching strategy around some *performance threshold*. It retains the incumbents who perform better than this threshold and replaces those who perform worse than this threshold with its appointee. In the following proposition, I first establish the threshold and then study its comparative statics (see Appendix A for proofs).

Proposition 1.

1. *In equilibrium, the unbiased government retains the incumbent if and only if the official's performance exceeds a performance threshold*

$$s^* \equiv p \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + 1/q}{2\pi}}; \quad (4)$$

2. *The performance threshold the government sets is decreasing in clarity of information, q .*

Several important features of the performance threshold (s^*) deserve additional attention. First, the unbiased government never retains low-performing incumbents. Suppose an incumbent is low-performing. Then, the government improves the candidates' pool when it replaces this office-holder with an appointee.

Second, the quality of information q has a two-fold impact on the government's strategy. On one hand, better information (higher q) improves the government's precision when it draws inferences about the incumbent's type from his performance. In Figure 1, the dashed line depicts the posterior distribution of the incumbent's qualification after the government observes his performance. The solid line shows the posterior for the numerically identical but more informative signal. These two curves illustrate that the government's expected utility from retaining *high-performing* incumbents increases in clarity of information, other things being equal. On the other hand, as transparency grows (higher q), a chance that the voter will mistakenly return to office an appointee who is, in fact, unqualified ($\theta_A < 0$) decreases. As a result, the government's utility from *replacing* the incumbent increases in the clarity of information.

Higher clarity of information both encourages the government to retain high-performing incumbents and encourages it to replace them. However, as every replacement might result in the appointment of an unqualified official, the former effect of information always prevails. The performance threshold that the government sets decreases in the clarity of information,

as illustrated by the dashed line in Figure 2a.

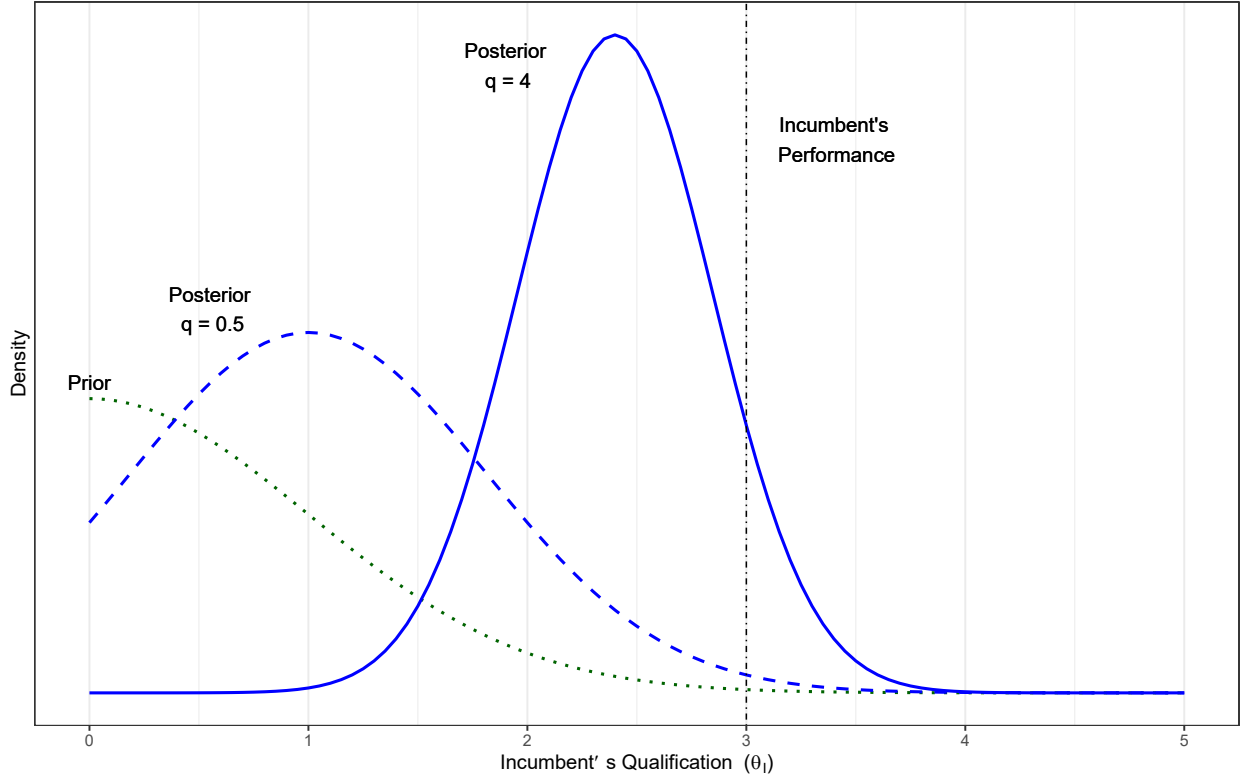


Figure 1: Posterior distribution of the incumbent's qualification following the signal $s_I = 3$, assuming $p = 1$. The dotted line represents the prior distribution of the incumbent's qualification. The dash-dotted vertical line indicates the signal s_I . The dashed line illustrates the posterior if the clarity of information is $q = 0.5$. The solid line shows the posterior if the clarity is $q = 4$.

In like manner to the second effect of better information, the performance threshold s^* increases in p , probability that the voter will observe some signal about the appointee's type. The higher p is, the more the government can rely on the voter to oust low-performing candidates in the election if it were to replace the incumbent. As a result, higher p encourages the government to replace the incumbent.

Finally, when clarity of information is absolute (q approaches infinity), the government knows that the competence (θ_I) of any high-performing ($s_I > 0$) incumbent exceeds average qualifications in the pool of candidates. Therefore, every high-performing incumbent will, in expectation, produce better policy outcomes than any other official in the candidate

pool. Despite this, one may notice that the government replaces some high-performing and, thus evidently qualified incumbents with its appointees in equilibrium. Numerically, as q approaches infinity, the performance threshold s^* converges to a positive value. Although this stringency may seem counterintuitive, the government strategy improves the expected winner's qualification. There is a high probability that the appointee will outperform the current official if the latter's performance is sufficiently low, while the forthcoming election mitigates risks associated with this replacement.

Biased Government. Co-partisan Incumbent

The biased government first decides whether to replace the incumbent. If it replaces the incumbent, the government also determines the appointee's partisanship: it might select either a co-partisan or a member of the opposition. Although the government values performance, the following is true regardless of the incumbent's party affiliation (see Appendix B.1):

Remark 2. *The biased government always selects the co-partisan appointee.*

The government replaces a co-partisan with the appointee if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned} p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0](E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + B) + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) + (1 - p) \times \beta \times B \\ > \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times (E[\theta_I|s_I] + B) + \mathbf{1}[s_I < 0] \times E[\theta_C]. \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Inequality (5) mirrors inequality (4), yet, the government gains a co-partisanship benefit (B) when it retains the high-performing incumbent, appoints the high-performing appointee, or when the voter does not observe the appointed official's performance.

When the incumbent is co-partisan, the biased government's optimal strategy satisfies the monotonicity property mentioned above: The biased government's expected utility from retaining the official is weakly increasing in the incumbent's qualification. If the incumbent is a co-partisan, the government follows a switching strategy and retains the office-holder if and only if the signal it observes exceeds some performance threshold (see Appendix B.2).

Proposition 2.

1. *In all equilibria, the government retains the co-partisan incumbent if and only if performance of the latter exceeds a performance threshold*

$$s^L \equiv \max\{0, p\sqrt{\frac{1+1/q}{2\pi}} + B \times (1+1/q) \times (p/2 + (1-p) \times \beta) - B \times (1+1/q)\}.$$

2. *If the incumbent is co-partisan, the biased government sets the performance threshold that decreases in the government's bias and non-monotonically depends on the clarity of information.*

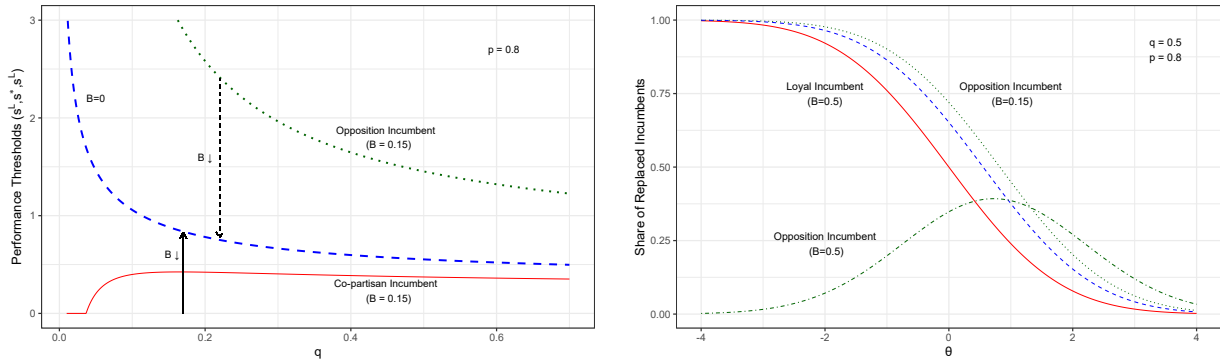
The first part of Proposition 2 establishes the biased government's strategy. Notice that the government that values partisanship never retains low-performing incumbents (s^L is non-negative). Although the biased government can tolerate low-qualification for a chance to have a co-partisan in office, this trade-off is unfeasible as the voter always ousts low-performing incumbents.

The biased government obtains higher utility when the co-partisan official wins the election. Therefore, the government sets a lower performance threshold for pro-regime officials (see Figure 2a) and, on average, replaces fewer co-partisan incumbents than would the unbiased government (see Appendix B.3). The dashed line in Figure 2b, shows how many incumbents the unbiased government replaces on average depending on the official's qualification (θ_I). Other things being equal, the biased government always removes fewer office-holders; the solid line, which represents a share of the co-partisan incumbents replaced by the biased government, lies below the dashed one.

The second part of Proposition 2 examines the comparative static of the biased government's strategy. The effect of the government's bias and the value β_L on the performance threshold is obvious. The higher the co-partisanship benefit, the less willing the government to trade co-partisanship benefits for a chance of better policies. The solid arrow in Figure 2a shows how the threshold changes if the bias (B) decreases.

The impact of information on the performance threshold is two-fold. Better information (i) improves the government's inferences about the incumbent's type and (ii) alters the partisanship's relative value. As in the case with the unbiased government, the first effect lowers the performance threshold (s^L) as the government's confidence in the high-performing incumbent's qualification grows. At the same time, better information also lowers the relative value of the partisanship and, thus, increases the opportunity cost of retaining the co-partisan. When the quality of information is low, the latter effect overrides the former. As clarity of information improves, the former effect begins to prevail. In Figure 2a, the solid line represents the performance threshold that the biased government sets for the incumbent.

Figure 2: Government's strategy



(a) The dotted line indicates the performance threshold that the unbiased government sets. The solid line shows the performance threshold that the biased government ($B = 0.15$, $\beta = 1$) sets for the co-partisan incumbent. The dotted line represents the threshold for the opposition incumbent. The solid arrow shows how the threshold for the co-partisan changes as B decreases. The dashed arrow demonstrates how the threshold for the opposition changes as the bias decreases.

(b) The dashed line shows the share of the incumbents whom the unbiased government replaces depending on the officials' true qualification. The solid line shows the share of the co-partisan incumbents replaced by the biased government ($B = 0.5$, $\beta = 1$). Dash-dotted lines represent the share of the opposition incumbent replaced by the biased government ($B = 0.5$ and $B = 0.15$, $\beta = 1$).

Biased Government. Opposition Incumbent

Let us now assume that the incumbent belongs to the opposition. If the government replaces the incumbent, it appoints the co-partisan official (see Remark 2). The government replaces

the opposition incumbent if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned}
p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0](E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + B) + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) + (1 - p) \times \beta \times B \\
> \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times E[\theta_I|s_I] + \mathbf{1}[s_I < 0] \times (E[\theta_C] + B).
\end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

Notice that the opposition incumbent's electoral defeat implies the co-partisan candidate's victory. It allows the government to employ the election to its advantage: as the voter ousts the low-performing incumbent in the election, the government can strategically retain the low-performing opposition to guarantee the co-partisan candidate's victory. Therefore, the sufficiently biased government's strategy no longer satisfies the monotonicity property (see Appendix B.4).

Lemma 1.

1. *If a co-partisanship benefit B is below a threshold*

$$B^* \equiv p \times \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \frac{1}{1 - p/2 - (1 - p) \times \beta},$$

the optimal strategy of the government satisfies the monotonicity property;

2. *If a co-partisanship benefit B exceeds the threshold B^* , the government always retains the low-performing incumbent, and the government's strategy does not satisfy the monotonicity property.*

I summarize the optimal strategy of the government with the opposition incumbent in the following proposition:

Proposition 3.

1. *If a co-partisanship benefit B is below the threshold B^* , the government retains the opposition incumbent if and only if performance of the latter exceeds a performance*

threshold

$$s^O \equiv p \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + 1/q}{2\pi}} + B \times (1 + 1/q) \times (p/2 + (1 - p) \times \beta); \quad (7)$$

2. *If a co-partisanship benefit B exceeds the threshold B^* , the government retains the opposition incumbent if and only if the latter is either low-performing or his performance exceeds the threshold s^O .*

If the incumbent belongs to the opposition, every replacement may result in the co-partisan's electoral victory, encouraging the government to replace high-performing incumbents. As a result, the biased government sets a higher performance threshold than the unbiased one for the high-performing opposition incumbent. In Figure 2a, the dotted line representing the performance threshold for the opposition incumbent lies above the dashed line showing the threshold that the unbiased government sets.

However, the government's inclination to replace the opposition does not necessarily translate into an ex-ante higher rate of the opposition incumbent's dismissal. When the government is highly biased ($B > B^*$), it utilizes the forthcoming election to guarantee the co-partisan candidate's victory. As a result, it replaces fewer incumbents on average than the government with the co-partisan incumbent (see Appendix B.5) at the expense of retaining a disproportionately high number of low-type opposition officials. Figure 2b demonstrates that the share of those replaced by the highly biased government ($B > B^*$) low-qualified ($\theta_I < 0$) co-partisan incumbent (the solid line) exceeds the share of the replaced low-qualified opposition incumbents.

I study comparative statics of the proposed class of equilibria in the next proposition:

Proposition 4.

1. *The performance threshold s^O is decreasing in clarity of information and increasing in a co-partisanship benefit;*

2. *The biased government is more likely to strategically retain low-performing incumbents as clarity of information deteriorates.*

If the incumbent belongs to the opposition, higher transparency improves the government's inferences and increases the partisanship's opportunity cost. Both encourage the government to retain the incumbent, and the performance threshold decreases in transparency. In Figure 2a, the dotted line representing the opposition incumbent's performance threshold decreases in clarity of information. In contrast, higher co-partisanship benefit encourages the government to replace the high-performing opposition incumbent, and the performance threshold increases in a co-partisanship benefit. In Figure 2a, the dotted arrow demonstrates how the threshold shifts if the bias declines.

The second part of Proposition 4 studies the impact of transparency on the government's decision to retain the low-performing incumbent. When the incumbent belongs to the opposition, the government's ability to draw better inferences about his type is redundant – the low-performing incumbent will not win the election. Nevertheless, the higher the clarity of information, the lower a chance that, after the government replaces the incumbent, the voter elects a high-performing ($s_A > 0$) but low-type ($\theta_A < 0$) appointee. Accordingly, higher transparency encourages the government to avoid strategic retention – the co-partisanship benefit's threshold (B^*) increases in information clarity.

3.2 Replacement Institution and Voter Welfare

Every regime must constantly balance the interests of the people and those of the elites: Although the latter may help the regime to “obtain principality,” revolutionary threats by the former can quickly undermine the state's authority (Machiavelli, 2008; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2010). Within the current model context, a co-partisanship benefit (B) exogenously captures the balance of power between the people's will and co-partisans' interests: the higher the value of B , the less the policy outcomes and population's satisfaction is of concern to the government.

Yet, the overall effect of the introduced hybrid institution on voter welfare remains out of interest. In this section, I ask whether the voter would forbid the biased government's interventions if empowered to do so. I demonstrate that, under certain conditions, the government's interventions are welfare improving.

Notice that I am referring to *ex-ante* (before the voter learns the incumbent's performance) welfare improvements. If the voter were to forbid the government's intervention after observing the performance, she would favor the government's interventions if and only if the government were unbiased, as, in this case, the government's interests coincide with those of the voter. From the ex-post perspective, the biased government's actions are always suboptimal for the voter: While the government values partisanship, it tempts to improve a co-partisan candidate's chances. As a result, upon seeing the incumbent's performance, the voter will favor the response opposite to the one the government adopts. However, from the *ex-ante* perspective, even the biased government's interventions can benefit the voter.

When the incumbent is co-partisan, the voter always prefers the government's interventions to the lack thereof, regardless of the government's bias (see Appendix C.2). In Figure 3a, the solid curve representing the ex-ante voter's expected utility with the co-partisan incumbent and the government's interventions lies above the dashed horizontal line that shows the expected utility subject to non-interference. Intuitively, when the incumbent is co-partisan, the government's interventions are always beneficial as the forthcoming election and the value of the official's performance restrain the government from actions that can harm the voter.

If the incumbent belongs to the opposition, the biased government, first, excessively replaces high-performing officials, and second, can strategically retain low-performing incumbents. Both actions lower the voter's utility. In Figure 3a, the solid line that demonstrates the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent and the government's interventions decreases in the government's bias; the downward arrow indicates the impact of the strategic retentions on the voter's utility. When the incumbent belongs to the opposition and

the government's bias is sufficiently high, the voter ex-ante prefers non-interference to the government's interventions (see Appendix C.3).

Proposition 5.

1. *If the incumbent is co-partisan, the voter (ex-ante) always prefers the biased governmental intervention to non-interference.*
2. *If the incumbent belongs to the opposition, the voter prefers the biased governmental interventions to non-interference if and only if the government's bias is sufficiently low ($B < B'(\beta, p)$).*

3.3 Incumbent's Partisanship and Voter Welfare

Next, let us assume that the replacement institution is inevitable. This section considers a larger game where the voter decides whether to elect a co-partisan or an opposition candidate to take an open seat. Once the voter makes her choice, this candidate becomes an incumbent and the baseline model timing repeats. The voter's decision results in one of two separate subgames: the one with an opposition incumbent and the one with a co-partisan incumbent. Both subgames are analyzed above.

The government's replacements supplement the candidates' pool with new, potentially highly qualified officials, while the lack thereof results in stagnation. Because of that, the voter, other things being equal, should prefer excessive replacements to insufficient replacements and, following this intuition, should favor opposition candidates over co-partisans in the open seat election (see Appendix C.4). Figure 3a, the dashed curve representing the voter's expected utility with excessive replacements lies above the dashed line that shows utility with insufficient replacements. The next proposition summarizes conditions under which the voter, instead, favors the co-partisan candidate over the opposition candidate in the open seat election (see Appendix C.5 for proofs).

Proposition 6.

1. *When the government is biased enough to retain low-performing opposition, the voter ex-ante favors the co-partisan incumbents.*
2. *When the government does not strategically retain low-performing opposition incumbents, the voter ex-ante favors the co-partisan incumbent if and only if probability of her learning of the appointee's performance is sufficiently low ($p < p'(\beta)$).*

Two factors divert the voter from supporting the opposition in the open seat election: high government bias (B) and low probability of voter's learning of the appointee's performance (p). High bias encourages the government to retain low-performing opposition incumbents (see Figure 3a). When the government is sufficiently biased, disadvantage produced by an inferior pool of competitors overrides the benefits of excessive replacements over insufficient replacements.

Low probability of the voter's learning of the appointee's performance lowers the expected qualification of the electoral winner and, thus, the performance thresholds set by the government.⁶

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial s^O}{\partial p} &= \frac{\partial s^L}{\partial p} = \sqrt{\frac{1 + 1/q}{2\pi}} + B(1/2 - \beta)(1 + 1/q) > 0, \\ \frac{\partial s^*}{\partial p} &= \sqrt{\frac{1 + 1/q}{2\pi}}.\end{aligned}\tag{8}$$

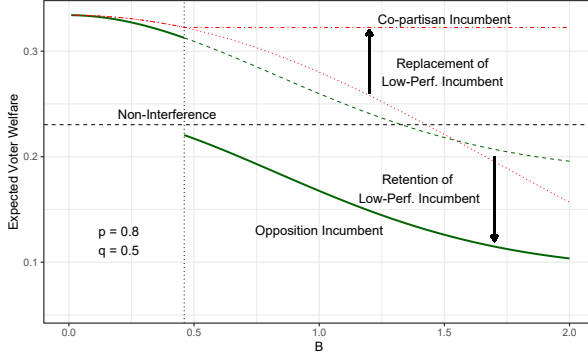
Suppose the voter is likely to support the appointee she learns nothing about ($\beta > 1/2$). In that case, the government's bias mitigates the learning probability impact on the government's strategy: the lower the probability that the voter returns the appointee to office, the less likely the government will replace the incumbent. In contrast, if the voter is unlikely to return to office the appointee she learns nothing about ($\beta < 1/2$), the bias aggravates the learning probability impact. Therefore, when $\beta > 1/2$, the lower the probability of voter's learning, the closer the government's strategy with the co-partisan to the voter's first best (s^*) and the lower the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent; the opposite is true when $\beta < 1/2$.

⁶For $B < \min\{B^*(\beta_O), B^*(\beta_L)\}$.

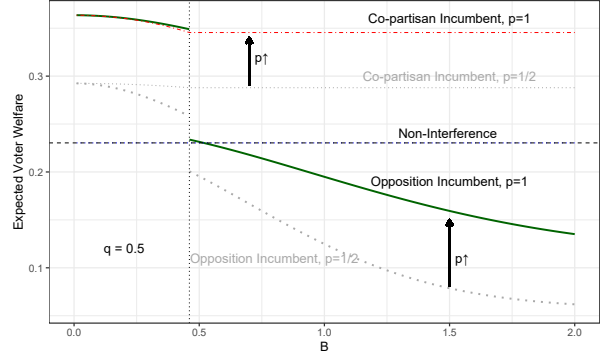
In the former case, the voter preferences for the co-partisan candidate over the opposition candidate strengthen as p decreases. In Figure 3b, the dashed curve that indicates the voter's expected utility with the co-partisan incumbent and $p = 1/2$ lies above the dotted curve that indicates the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent and $p = 1/2$ for all B . When $\beta > 1/2$, the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent always exceeds the voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent. To see that, assume $\beta = 1/2$. The government's bias does not affect the impact of the voter's learning; the voter prefers excessive replacements to the lack thereof and, thus, the opposition candidate to the co-partisan (see Appendix C). The threshold set by the government decreases in β for all p . Therefore, when $\beta < 1/2$, the voter prefers the opposition to the co-partisan in the open seat election.

To summarize, when the voter is unlikely to learn the appointee's performance or the government's bias is high, the voter benefits when she elects the co-partisan candidate more than when she votes for the opposition one. As a result, even when the voter exogenously prefers opposition officials, she still might support the regime's co-partisan in the open seat election. This observation proposes an additional explanation for the popular support of non-democratic regimes. What is more, it suggests that the central government can utilize this hybrid institution to improve the regime's stability as the anticipation of the government's interventions will encourage the voter to favor the regime's co-partisans.

Figure 3: Incumbent's partisanship and voter welfare



(a) The solid curve represents expected voter welfare with the opposition incumbent and the government that strategically retains low-performing opposition. The dashed curve indicates expected voter welfare when the government retains low-performing incumbents. The dash-dotted curve shows expected voter welfare with the co-partisan incumbent. The dotted curve indicates expected voter welfare when the voter cannot affect the incumbent's electoral perspectives and the government retains the low-performing co-partisan incumbents. The dashed line represents expected voter utility in the case of non-interference. The vertical dotted line demonstrates the partisanship benefit threshold above which the biased government retains low-performing opposition incumbents. $\beta = (1, 1)$.



(b) Dotted curves indicate the expected voter's utility when probability of voter's learning of the appointee's performance $p = 1/2$. The solid curve shows the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent. The dash-dotted curve demonstrates the voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent. $\beta = (1, 1)$.

4 Extensions

In the following section, I relax assumptions of the baseline model and introduce two extensions to it. I allow for (i) electoral unfairness and (ii) costly replacements (see SI Appendix C for asymmetric information assumption). I demonstrate that the paper's main results hold (see SI Appendix) and that the introduced extensions aggravate the voter's incentives to ex-ante support pro-regime candidates. For tractability, I assume that the voter returns

to office the appointee she learns nothing about.⁷

4.1 Unfair Elections

In non-democratic countries, elections are seldom fair and rarely pursue a selection of qualified officials. Instead, as I mentioned earlier, non-democratic governments can employ elections to estimate popular support, promote the regime’s popularity or to persuade the international community in its legitimacy. Given the above, I relax the assumption of electoral integrity and estimate a contribution of fair elections to population welfare.

Let us assume that if the voter casts a ballot against a *co-partisan* candidate, the latter, nevertheless, wins the election with probability α . In particular, when $\alpha = 0$, the election is fair, the co-partisan office-holder wins the race if his performance exceeds the average. On the contrary, if $\alpha = 1$, the voter’s preferences cannot change the course of the co-partisan authority’s career. In what follows, I call α electoral unfairness. Examples of electoral unfairness may involve partial media coverage of candidates, candidates’ exclusion from the ballot, voter oppression, malicious design of the ballot papers, lack of a secret ballot, and many others (Robie, 2014; Enikolopov et al., 2011; Wilson, 2006; Hartlyn et al., 2008; Rose and Mishler, 2009).

The electoral unfairness (α) does not affect the voter’s optimal strategy: She tries to oust low-performing officials. It also does not mitigate the government’s incentives to select co-partisan appointees. However, the biased government adapts its replacement strategy to changed circumstances (see SI Appendix A1 and A2). The higher the electoral unfairness, the higher the *low-performing* appointee’s chances are to win the election, and the lower the co-partisan benefit’s contribution to the government’s utility following the replacement. Therefore, higher electoral unfairness deters the government from replacing high-performing co-partisans.

When the incumbent belongs to the opposition, the co-partisan benefit’s impact and

⁷For instance, one can assume that every current local authority reaps the benefits of better name recognition and favorable television ratings (Prior, 2006; Kahn and Kenney, 1999).

performance component's impact are not co-aligned as above. Higher electoral unfairness deprives the high-performing opposition incumbent's electoral chances that encourages the government to replace opposition incumbents. At the same time, higher electoral unfairness increases co-partisan challenger's and appointee's⁸ chances to win the election, discouraging the government from replacing the opposition.

Higher electoral unfairness lowers the voter's utility (see SI Appendix A4). First, it directly improves the electoral chances of low-performing co-partisan candidates and lowers the high-performing *opposition* incumbent's electoral chances. Second, it indirectly harms the voter by affecting the government's actions and discouraging the government from welfare-improving replacements of the high-performing co-partisans.

Finally, electoral unfairness aggravates the voter's incentives to vote for the co-partisan incumbent in the open seat election. Notice that higher electoral unfairness never affects the low-performing incumbent's chances to win the election: The voter does not re-elect the low-performing opposition incumbent, and the government does not retain the low-performing co-partisan incumbent. Electoral unfairness evenly affects the voter's utility following the incumbent's replacement regardless of his partisanship: It increases the probability of re-turning the low-performing appointee to office. However, electoral unfairness decreases the high-performing opposition incumbent's electoral chances. It further discourages the voter from supporting the opposition candidate who is unlikely to win the forthcoming election in the open seat election (see SI Appendix A5).

The following proposition summarizes the main results of this section:

Proposition 7. *Higher electoral unfairness:*

- (i) *encourages the government to replace fewer high-performing co-partisan incumbents;*
- (ii) *lowers the voter's utility;*
- (iii) *further aggravates the voter's incentives to ex-ante support co-partisan candidates.*

⁸Notice that α affects *only* low-performing appointee's.

4.2 Costly Replacements

Let us assume that every replacement costs the government c , where c is non-negative. This cost might arise from selecting an appointee or persuading a current official to leave office. Alternatively, one can interpret c as a possible adverse population reaction to the replacement. For instance, in 2020, the Russian government arrested and replaced the governor of Khabarovsk Krai, which later sparked protests by the region's population.⁹

The cost of replacements does not affect the voter's strategy. She returns the official to office iff he is high-performing. Neither does it alternate the government's choice of the appointee's partisanship: the government always selects a co-partisan. The replacement cost only affects the government's replacement strategy: higher costs discourage the government from replacing office-holders.

Initially, it seems that the replacement cost should improve voter welfare. It shields high-performing opposition incumbents from unnecessary replacements driven by the government's wish to install a co-partisan. A higher replacement cost lowers the government's performance threshold for opposition incumbents (see SI Appendix B).

However, first, a higher cost simultaneously discourages welfare improving replacements of co-partisan incumbents. Second, the replacement cost deepens the government's incentives to strategically retain the low-performing opposition incumbent (see SI Appendix B).

The results are summarized below. See SI Appendix B for formal proofs:

Proposition 8.

1. *When the incumbent belongs to the opposition, voter utility increases in the cost of replacements for $c < c^*$.*
2. *When the incumbent is co-partisan, the voter's utility weakly decreases in replacement cost.*

⁹New Protests in Russia's Far East After Governor Replaced; The New York Times

3. A threshold above which the government retains low-performing opposition incumbents strategically (B_c^*) decreases in the cost of the replacements.

Finally, a sufficiently high replacement cost aggravates the voter's incentives to ex-ante support the co-partisan and encourages the government to retain fewer co-partisans than opposition incumbents (see SI Appendix B):

Proposition 9.

1. If the replacement cost is sufficiently high $c > c^O$, the voter ex-ante weakly prefers the co-partisan incumbent to the opposition incumbent in the open seat election.
2. If the replacement cost is sufficiently high $c > c^O$, the government replaces fewer opposition incumbents than co-partisan incumbents.

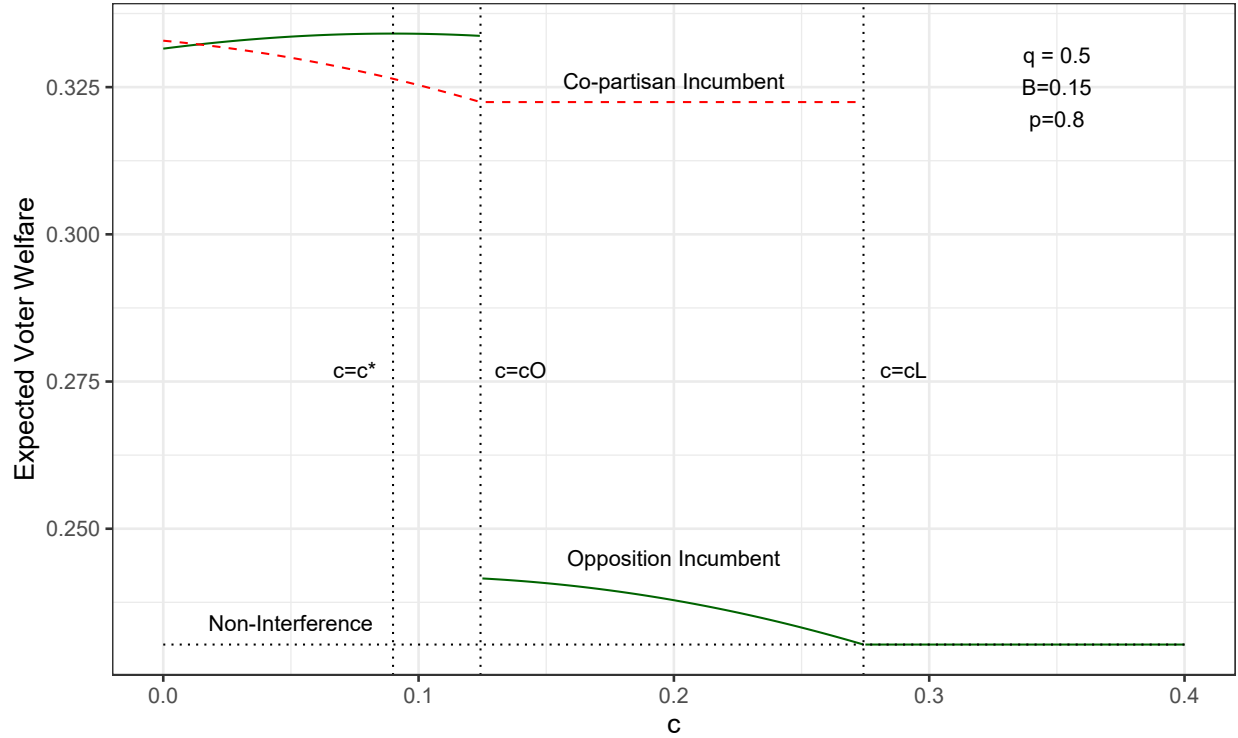


Figure 4: Voter welfare with costly replacements. The solid curve represents the voter's expected utility with the opposition incumbent. The dashed curve shows the voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent. Vertical dashed lines show the thresholds c^* , c^O and c^L . The horizontal dotted line represents the expected voter's utility in the case of non-interference. The voter's utility is increasing in c for $c \in [0, c^*]$. The voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent exceeds the voter's utility with the opposition incumbent for $c \in [c^O, c^L]$.

5 Conclusion

This paper examines novel to the literature but frequently employed institution that combines elections and federal appointments. I show that in the presence of this hybrid procedure, high government bias toward co-partisan local officials promotes voter support of pro-regime candidates in the open seat election even when the election is fair, and the information available to the government and the voter is symmetric. This finding speaks to a broader question of local robustness for the non-democratic regimes. It suggests that the voters who might otherwise oppose the regime nevertheless can unwillingly contribute to its sustainability as they pursue the selection of high-type local officials in office.

I analyze two channels by which the voters' support for non-democratic regimes arises. The first one emphasizes the heterogeneity in how the forthcoming elections affect the government's optimal actions depending on the incumbent's partisanship. The government's bias encourages it to *excessively replace* opposition incumbents even though it results in worse-performing local officials in office. The bias also encourages the government to *retain* co-partisan incumbents even when a replacement can improve an elected authority's expected qualification. I demonstrate that when the incumbent is the regime's co-partisan, the forthcoming election effectively constrains the biased government for the voter's benefit, not allowing it to retain low-performing candidates. However, the election *cannot* limit the government's conduct concerning the opposition incumbent. The second channel concerns the strategic use of the forthcoming election by the central government: A sufficiently biased government retains low-performing opposition incumbents to ensure the co-partisan challenger's victory. The combination of these two effects encourages the voter to favor pro-regime incumbents in the open seat election.

In addition to this, I demonstrate that the voter benefits from the government's interventions and, empowered to forbid them, she will do so if only if (i) the government is sufficiently biased, and (ii) the incumbent belongs to the opposition, and (iii) the probability of the voter's learning about the appointee's qualification is sufficiently low. Therefore, if

given a chance, the rational voter will not protest against the introduction of the hybrid institution that combines elections and appointments.

Finally, I show that the clarity of information non-monotonically affects the government's decision to replace co-partisan incumbents, as information clarity alternates the opportunity cost of partisanship to the biased government. I also demonstrate that the biased government will replace fewer opposition incumbents than co-partisans in equilibrium. Lastly, I relax the baseline model's assumptions and demonstrate that the results are robust to the introduced extension, and, what is more, I show that these modifications lower voter welfare and aggravate voter support of non-democratic regime.

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Appendices

A Unbiased Government

The unbiased government replaces the incumbent if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned} p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0]E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) + (1 - p) \times \beta \times E[\theta_A] \\ > \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times E[\theta_I|s_I] + \mathbf{1}[s_I < 0] \times E[\theta_C]. \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

The RHS of equation 9 increases in s_I . Therefore, if the government retains the incumbent who produces policy s_I , it should also retain every official who performs better and the government's strategy satisfies the monotonicity property.

The unbiased government acts after it observes the incumbent's performance which doubles as a signal of his qualification (s_I). The government knows that the population votes for the incumbent in the election if and only if his performance exceeds the average ($s_I \geq 0$). Therefore, if the government chooses $R = 1$, its expected utility:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_G(R = 1|s_I, B = 0)] &= \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times E[\theta_I|s_I] \\ &= \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x \frac{f_{\theta_I, \varepsilon_I}(x, s_I - x)}{f_{\theta_I + \varepsilon_I}(s_I)} dx \\ &= \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \frac{1}{1 + 1/q} \times s_I. \end{aligned}$$

At the same time, if the unbiased government decides to replace the incumbent with the appointee, it cannot predict how well the latter will perform. With some probability the government can replace the incumbent with the low-performing appointee, which will result in the challenger's electoral victory. The expected utility of the government which decides

to replace the incumbent with the appointee ($R = 0$):

$$\begin{aligned}
E[U_{B=0}(R = 0|s_I)] &= p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0]E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) \\
&= p \times Pr[s_A \geq 0] \times \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{0-y}^{\infty} x f_{\theta_A, \varepsilon_A}(x, y) dx dy / Pr[\theta_A + \varepsilon_A \geq 0] + 0 \\
&= p \times \frac{1}{2} \times \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-y}^{\infty} x \frac{1}{2\pi\sigma_{\theta_A}\sigma_{\varepsilon_A}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu_{\theta_A})^2}{2\sigma_{\theta_A}^2} - \frac{(y-\mu_{\varepsilon_A})^2}{2\sigma_{\varepsilon_A}^2}} dx dy \times 2 \\
&= p \times \frac{1}{2} \frac{2}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}.
\end{aligned}$$

The government retains the incumbent if and only if it observes a signal that exceeds a threshold:

$$s^* \equiv p \times \frac{\sqrt{1+1/q}}{\sqrt{2\pi}}.$$

B Biased Government

B.1 Appointee's Partisanship

If the government appoints an opposition, it gets utility:

$$\begin{aligned}
&E[U_B(\text{Replace Incumbent, Opposition Appointee})] \\
&= p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0]E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + Pr[s_A < 0](E[\theta_C] + B)).
\end{aligned} \tag{10}$$

When the government appoints a co-partisan, it receives utility:

$$\begin{aligned}
&E[U_B(\text{Replace Incumbent, Co-partisan Appointee})] \\
&= p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0](E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + B) + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) \\
&\quad + (1-p) \times \beta \times B.
\end{aligned} \tag{11}$$

Equation 11 weakly exceeds equation 10. Therefore, other things being equal, the government always appoints a co-partisan.¹⁰

B.2 Performance Threshold for the Co-partisan Incumbent

The government retains the co-partisan incumbent if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned} p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0](E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + B) + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) + (1 - p) \times \beta \times B \\ \leq \mathbf{1}[s_I \geq 0] \times (E[\theta_I|s_I] + B) + \mathbf{1}[s_I < 0] \times E[\theta_C]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the government retains the co-partisan incumbent if his performance exceeds the threshold:

$$s^L \equiv \max\{0, p\sqrt{\frac{1 + 1/q}{2\pi}} - B \times (1 + 1/q) \times (1 - p/2 - \beta \times (1 - p))\}. \quad (12)$$

B.3 Share of Replaced Co-partisan Incumbents

$$Pr[R = 0|B = 0] = Pr[s_I < s^*] = \Phi\left(\frac{s^*}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}\right) \quad (13)$$

$$Pr[R = 0|\text{Co-partisan Incumbent}, B] = Pr[s_I < s^L] = \Phi\left(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}\right) \quad (14)$$

Because s^* exceeds s^L , equation 13 exceeds equation 14, and the biased government replaces fewer co-partisan incumbents than the unbiased one would.

B.4 Low-performing Opposition and the Monotonicity Property

The biased government strategically retains the low-performing opposition incumbent if and only if:

¹⁰When the voter chooses $\beta = 0$, the government is indifferent between the co-partisan appointee and the opposition appointee. To guarantee uniqueness, I refine the set of equilibria using trembling hand refinement.

$$\begin{aligned}
& p \times (Pr[s_A \geq 0](E[\theta_A|s_A \geq 0] + B) + Pr[s_A < 0]E[\theta_C]) \\
& \quad + (1 - p) \times \beta \times B \leq E[\theta_C] + B. \\
& \quad \Updownarrow \\
& p \times \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \leq B \times (1 - p/2 - (1 - p) \times \beta). \\
& \quad \Updownarrow \\
& B \geq p \times \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \frac{1}{1 - p/2 - (1 - p) \times \beta}. \tag{15}
\end{aligned}$$

Sufficiently biased government strategically retains low-performing opposition, the government's strategy does not satisfy the monotonicity property.

B.5 Share of Replaced Opposition Incumbents

When the government is highly biased ($B > B^*$), expected probability of the opposition incumbent to be replaced is equal to:

$$\begin{aligned}
Pr[R = 0 | \text{Opposition Incumbent}, B > B^*] &= Pr[s_I < s^L, s_I \geq 0] \\
&= \Phi\left(\frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}\right) - 1/2 \tag{16}
\end{aligned}$$

For bias B above the threshold B^* , the share of replaced co-partisans is constant and equates to $\Phi(0) = \frac{1}{2}$: The sufficiently biased government only replaces low-performing co-partisans. At the same time, the share of replaced opposition incumbents ($P[R = 0 | \text{Opposition Incumbent}, B > B^*]$) is increasing in B . As B goes to infinity, $P[R = 0 | \text{Opposition Incumbent}, B > B^*]$ converges to $1/2$. Therefore, for any given set of parameters, if the government is sufficiently biased ($B > B^*$), it replaces more co-partisan incumbents than opposition incumbents.

C Voter Welfare

C.1 Non-interference and Unbiased Government Interventions

The voter's expected utility in case of non-interference:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Non-interference}] &= Pr[s_I \leq 0]E[\theta_C] + Pr[s_I \geq 0]E[\theta_I | s_I \geq 0] \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

Now, let us assume that the government can intervene and replace incumbents. If the government is unbiased, it retains those official whose performance exceeds the performance threshold s^* , where s^* :

$$s^* = p \times \sqrt{\frac{1+1/q}{2\pi}}.$$

The expected utility of the voter:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Unbiased Government}] &= Pr[s_I \leq s^*] \times p \times (Pr[s_A \leq 0]E[\theta_C] \\ &\quad + Pr[s_A > 0]E[\theta_A | s_A > 0]) + Pr[s_I \leq s^*](1-p)E[\theta_A] \\ &\quad + Pr[s_I > s^*]E[s_I | s_I > s^*] \\ &= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{s^*}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{s^*}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi}\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}, \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

where $\Phi(\cdot)$ denotes CDF of standard normal distribution, $\phi(\cdot)$ denotes PDF of standard normal distribution.

Equation (25) increases in p :

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Unbiased Government}]'_p &= \left(\frac{e^{-(p/\sqrt{2\pi})^2/2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \Phi\left(\frac{s^*}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) - \frac{e^{-(p/\sqrt{2\pi})^2/2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{p}{2\pi} \sqrt{2\pi}\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} > 0 \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

When p is minimal ($p=0$), equation (25) equates to equation (24):

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Unbiased Government}, p = 0] &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \\ &= E[U_V | \text{Non-interference}]. \end{aligned} \tag{20}$$

The voter always benefits from the unbiased government's intervention.

C.2 The Government's Interventions VS Non-interference: Co-partisan Incumbent

Let the government benefit from partisanship of the local officials. If the incumbent is co-partisan, the latter retains all office-holders whose performance exceeds the performance threshold s^L . The expected utility of the voter:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Co-partisan}] &= Pr[s_I \leq s^L] \times p \times (Pr[s_A \leq 0]E[\theta_C] \\ &\quad + Pr[s_A > 0]E[\theta_A | s_A > 0]) + Pr[s_I > s^L]E[s_I | s_I > s^L] \\ &= (\Phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}) \times p + \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}) \times \sqrt{2\pi}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \end{aligned} \tag{21}$$

If $B > B^*$, then $s^L = 0$ and:

$$E[U_V | \text{Co-partisan}] = (p/2 + 1) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \geq E[U_V | \text{Non-interference}].$$

When, instead, $B \leq B^*$, $E[U_V|\text{Co-partisan}]$ increases in β :

$$\begin{aligned}
& E[U_V|\text{Co-partisan}]'_\beta \\
&= (p \times \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}) \times (s^L)'_\beta \\
&- \sqrt{2\pi} \times \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}) \times \frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \times (s^L)'_\beta) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \\
&= (p - p + B \frac{(1 - \beta(1 - p) - p/2)p}{1 - p/2} \sqrt{1+1/q}) \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}) \\
&\quad \times (s^L)'_\beta \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \geq 0.
\end{aligned} \tag{22}$$

Therefore, it reaches its minimum at $\beta = 0$. $E[U_V|\text{Co-partisan}, \beta = 0]$ increases in p for every B :

$$\begin{aligned}
& E[U_V|\text{Co-partisan}]'_p \\
&= (\Phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}) + p \times \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}})(s^L)'_p \\
&- \sqrt{2\pi} \times \phi(\frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}) \times \frac{s^L}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \times (s^L)'_p) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \geq 0,
\end{aligned} \tag{23}$$

where $(s^L)'_p = B \times (1 + 1/q)/2 > 0$. When p is minimal ($p=0$), equation (28) coincides with equation (24) and as p increases, so does expected utility of the voter from the biased government's interventions. Therefore, the voter always benefits from the biased government's interventions if the incumbent is co-partisan.

C.3 The Government's Interventions VS Non-interference: Opposition Incumbent

When the incumbent belongs to the opposition, the government values co-partisanship, the the co-partisanship bias is moderate ($B \leq B^*$), the government retains the incumbent if and only if his performance exceeds the performance threshold s^O .

The expected utility of the voter:

$$\begin{aligned}
E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, B \leq B^*] &= Pr[s_I \leq s^O] \times p \times (Pr[s_A \leq 0]E[\theta_C] \\
&\quad + Pr[s_A > 0]E[\theta_A | s_A > 0]) + Pr[s_I > s^O]E[s_I | s_I > s^O] \\
&= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi}\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}.
\end{aligned} \tag{24}$$

Because:

$$p - \sqrt{2\pi} \frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} < 0,$$

the expected utility of the voter with the opposition incumbent decreases in β (see equation 22) and reaches its minimum at $\beta = 1$, $B = B^*$. When $B = B^*$:

$$\begin{aligned}
E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, B = B^*, \beta = 1] \\
= \left(\Phi(\sqrt{2/\pi}) \times p + \phi(\sqrt{2/\pi}) \times \sqrt{2\pi}\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}},
\end{aligned} \tag{25}$$

and the government's interventions benefit the voter if:

$$p \geq p^* \equiv \frac{1 - \sqrt{2\pi}\phi(\sqrt{2/\pi})}{\Phi(\sqrt{2/\pi})} \approx 0.34.$$

Therefore, when $p \in [1/2, 1]$, the government's interventions when $B < B^*$ and the incumbent belongs to the opposition always benefit the voter.¹¹

When $B > B^*$, the government strategically retains the low-performing incumbent. The voter's utility:

$$\begin{aligned}
E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, B \geq B^*] &= Pr[0 < s_I \leq s^O] \times p \times (Pr[s_A \leq 0]E[\theta_C] \\
&\quad + Pr[s_A > 0]E[\theta_A | s_A > 0]) + Pr[s_I > s^O]E[s_I | s_I > s^O] \\
&= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{s^O}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} - p/2\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}.
\end{aligned} \tag{26}$$

¹¹When $p \in [0, 1]$, for every β there exists $p(\beta)$ s.t. the government's interventions benefit the voter for all B iff $p \geq p(\beta)$.

$E[U_V|\text{Opposition}, B \geq B^*]$ decreases in β and B . For every β equation 26 reaches minimum when B goes to infinity:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{B \rightarrow \infty} E[U_V|\text{Opposition}, B \geq B^*] &= p/2 \times \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} \\ &< E[U_V|\text{Non-interference}]. \end{aligned} \quad (27)$$

Equation (26) reaches maximum when B goes to B^* and β goes to 0:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{B \rightarrow \infty} E[U_V|\text{Opposition}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^{*+}} B, \beta = 0] &= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1-p/2}\right) \times p \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1-p/2}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} - p/2 \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (28)$$

For $p = 1$,¹² equation 28 exceeds equation 17. As voter's utility with the opposition incumbent decreases in B , for every β and p there exists a unique threshold $B'(\beta, p)$ s.t. the voter favors non-interference over the government's interventions if and only if $B \geq B'(\beta, p)$:

$$B'(\beta, p) \equiv E[U_V|\text{Opposition}, B \geq B^*]^{-1}(1).$$

C.4 Excessive Replacements over Insufficient Replacements

Let us prove that the voter prefers excessive replacements over insufficient replacements other things being equal. The optimal rate of replacements:

$$s^* = p \sqrt{\frac{1+1/q}{2\pi}}.$$

¹²For all $p \in [0, 1]$.

Let us compare voter's utility if the government sets the replacement threshold above s^* and below s^* . That is equivalent to comparing:

$$\Phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} - x\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} - x\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} \text{ VS } \Phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} + x\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} + x\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi}.$$

for $x \geq 0$. Because they coincide when $x = 0$ and:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\partial \Phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} - x\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} - x\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} - \Phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} + x\right) \times p - \phi\left(\frac{p}{\sqrt{2\pi}} + x\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi}}{\partial x} \\ &= e^{-\frac{(p+x\sqrt{2\pi})^2}{4\pi}} (e^{px\sqrt{2/\pi}} - 1)x > 0, \end{aligned}$$

the voter prefers excessive replacements to insufficient replacements other things being equal.

C.5 Co-partisan Incumbent or Opposition Incumbent

The voter's utility with the opposition incumbent and the voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent coincide when $B = 0$ and both decrease in B . Notice that the voter's strategy might be contingent on the incumbent's partisanship. Let's denote probability that the voter returns the appointee she learns nothing about when the incumbent is co-partisan as β_L and as β_O when the incumbent belongs to the opposition: $\beta = (\beta_O, \beta_L)$. B^* increases in β . When $\beta_L \leq \beta_O$, $B^*(\beta_L) \leq B^*(\beta_O)$.

$$E[U_V | \text{Co-partisan}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^*(\beta_O)^-} B] = (p/2 + 1) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \quad (29)$$

$$\begin{aligned} & E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^*(\beta_O)^-} B] \\ &= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times p \right. \\ & \quad \left. + \phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

Let us denote:

$$\Gamma(p) \equiv \Phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} - p/2.$$

For every $\beta = (\beta_O, \beta_L)$ s.t. $\beta_L \leq \beta_O$, there exists a unique threshold $p'(\beta)$ s.t. for every $p > p'(\beta)$ and every $B < B^*(\beta_O)$ the expected utility of the voter with biased government with the co-partisan incumbent is lower than the expected utility with the opposition incumbent, where $p'(\beta) = \Gamma^{-1}(1) \cap [0, 1]$.

When $\beta_L > \beta_O$:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Co-partisan}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^*(\beta_O)^-} B] &= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{(1-p)(\beta_L - \beta_O)p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times p \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \phi\left(\frac{(1-p)(\beta_L - \beta_O)p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2 - (1-p)\beta_O}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (31)$$

Because $(\Phi(x) \times p + \phi(x) \times \sqrt{2\pi})$ decreases in x for all $x > p/\sqrt{2\pi}$, it always exceeds $E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^*(\beta_O)^-} B]$. Therefore, if $\beta_L > \beta_O$, the voter always prefers the co-partisan incumbent to the opposition incumbent.

Second, let us compare the voter utility with the opposition incumbent and with the co-partisan incumbent. For equation (26) reaches maximum at $\beta = 0$ as B goes to B^{*+} :

$$\begin{aligned} &E[U_V | \text{Opposition}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^{*+}} B] \\ &= \left(\Phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2}\right) \times p + \phi\left(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1 - p/2}\right) \times \sqrt{2\pi} - p/2 \right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (32)$$

For $B > B^*$, the voter's utility with the co-partisan incumbent (21) equates to:

$$\begin{aligned} E[U_V | \text{Co-partisan}, B > B^*] &= (\Phi(0) \times p \\ &\quad + \phi(0) \times \sqrt{2\pi}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}} \\ &= (p/2 + 1) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + 1/q}}. \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

When $p = 0$, equation 32 equates to 33. Because:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\partial(E[U_V|\text{Opposition}, \lim_{B \rightarrow B^+} B] - E[U_V|\text{Co-partisan}, B > B^*])}{\partial p} \\ &= (\Phi(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1-p/2}) - 1 - \phi(\frac{p/\sqrt{2\pi}}{1-p/2}) \frac{\sqrt{2/\pi} \times 2p^2}{(2-p)^3}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+1/q}} < 0. \end{aligned} \quad (34)$$

Equation 33 exceeds equation 32. The voter always favors the co-partisan incumbent when the government is sufficiently biased.