

La reelección municipal como póliza de seguro^{*}

Eric Magar

ITAM

emagar@itam.mx

12 de febrero de 2026

Resumen

Recent research uncovers systematic evidence of an incumbency curse in Mexican elections. The pattern resembles those found in Brazil, India, Romania, and Zambia. A study of marginal municipal races between 1997 and 2010 revealed a discontinuity in the likelihood of winning the next election, estimating a .20 drop in the probability of reelecting in time $t+1$ the party that barely won in time t relative to the party that barely lost. This paper replicates the analysis extending data to also cover the following decade, when Mexico removed single-term limits for municipal governments. I find that the incumbency curse holds for races with an open seat. But when the incumbent mayor was on the ballot, the discontinuity is systematically reversed for every party. An incumbent mayor with static ambition therefore shields municipal parties from highly likely defeat.

Cuando un partido asume las riendas del gobierno ¿puede esperarse que mejoren sus fortunas electorales futuras? ¿O podrían, paradójicamente, empeorar sistemáticamente?

^{*}Paper read at Tec de Monterrey's Political Science Conference, Feb. 27–28, 2026. I am grateful for the generous support of the Asociación Mexicana de Cultura A.C. and to Gabino Martínez Díaz and Rodrigo Santibáñez Razo for research assistance. The author bears full responsibility for errors and limitations in the study.

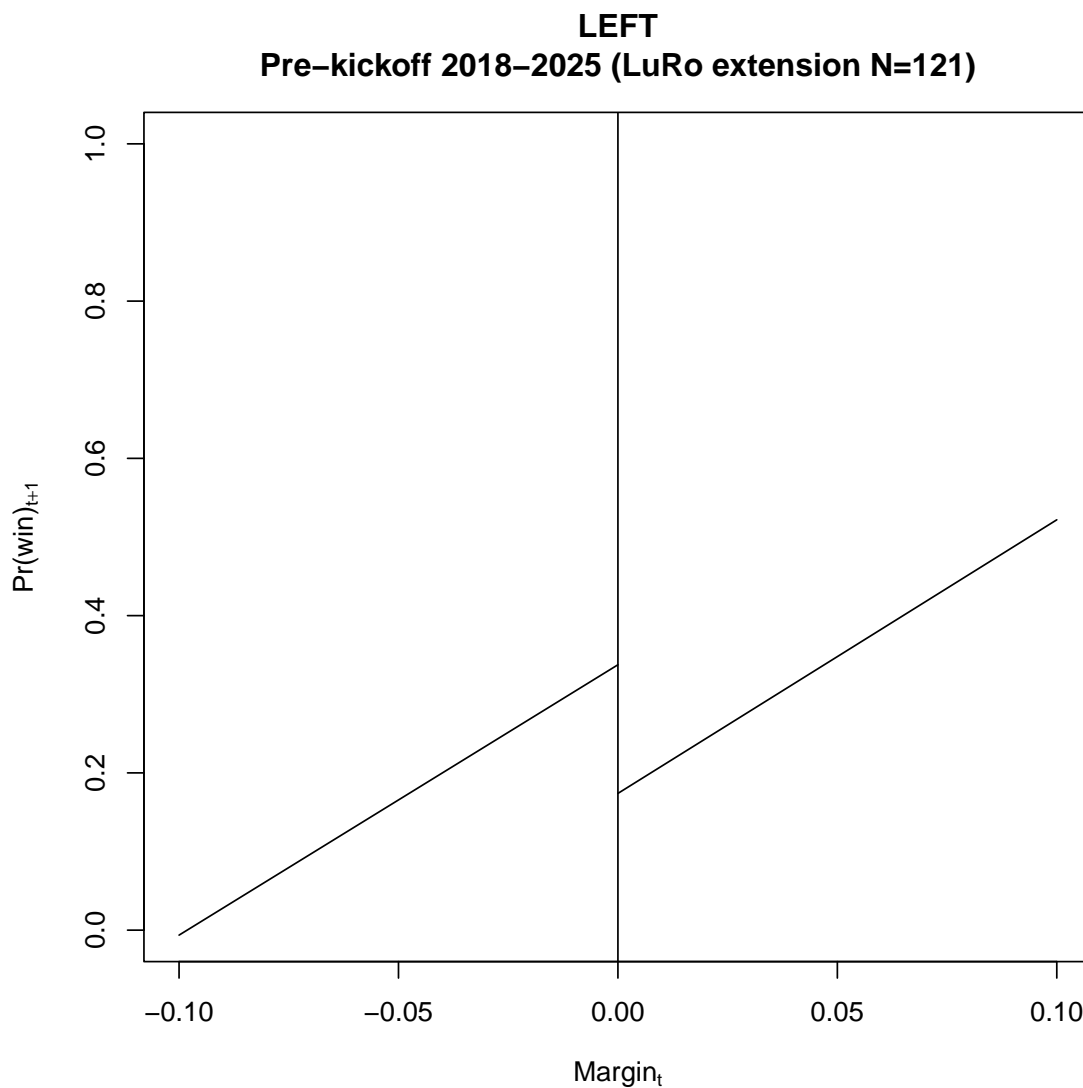


Diagrama 1: The effect of the election margin on the future probability of reelection

1. Introduction

Texto