**Incumbency Advantage Mechanisms**

A positive return to incumbency:

The typical finding is that incumbents outperform non-incumbents \citep{gelman\_king\_1990, cox\_morgensten\_1993, ansolabehere\_snyder\_2000, hirano\_snyder\_2009}. This can be due to...

\begin{itemize}

\item Parties shape policy \citep{cox\_mccubins\_1993, cox\_mccubins\_2006}, and policy generates electoral returns (cite from reelection backfire)

\item they draw loyalty from voters \citep{campbell\_etal\_1960, green\_etal\_2002}.

\item sophomore surge: new official will garner more votes when running for his first reelection than when she was a challenger \citep{erikson\_1971, alford\_brady\_1989}.

\end{itemize}

But an incumbency disadvantage can also be present:

\begin{itemize}

\item voters prefer partisan balance \citep{campbell\_miller\_1957, lewis\_beck\_2004, folke\_snyder\_2012}

\item voters dislike political institutions relative to incumbent officials \citep{fenno\_1975, parker\_davidson\_1979}.

\item grass-is-greener effect and value outside options, even when the candidate is from a bad type \citep{brenner\_etal\_2007, bordalo\_etal\_2012, bhaia\_turan\_2013}

\item \citep{klasnja\_titiunik\_2017} explanation

\item retirement slump: parties lose votes when the incumbent retires \citep{alford\_brady\_1989}, or when there are term limits \citep{ansolabehere\_snyder\_2004}.

\item Institutional changes, including redistricting, may decrease electoral support of incumbents \citep{ansolabehere\_etal\_2000, desposato\_petrocik\_2003}

\end{itemize}

1. Resources based
   1. Incumbency advantage appears more in states where legislators have more opportunity to perform casework services for their constituents. So ability to expand the size of the bureaucracy and thus increase public labor. Also found the size of the budget is higher. So maybe citizens expect a higher budget or transfer. Cox and Morgensten (1995)
   2. Incumbency confers valuable resources and media exposure, and these can be expected to have both a direct and an indirect effect on the vote. The direct effect arises because legislative resources (e.g., personal staff) can be used in electorally useful ways (e.g., to perform casework). The incumbency advantage may have increased because incumbents had more resources and opportunities to perform constituency services (a direct effect). (Cox and Katz 1995)
2. Quality based
   1. The indirect effect arises because potential challengers, knowing that incumbents can derive large direct benefits from the resources at their disposal, will be less inclined to enter the fray-and this will be particularly true of potential challengers with higher opportunity costs, hence higher quality. That incumbents can scare off quality opponents seems to be generally appreci­ated in the literature. What has been less clearly recognized is that how much this boosts the incumbency advantage depends on how much candidate quality matters in determin­ing the vote. The incumbency advantage may have increased because incumbents had more resources and opportunities to perform constituency services (a direct effect); or be­cause knowledge of these resources and opportunities scared off high-quality challengers (an indirect effect); or both. But even holding constant these factors, the incumbency advantage may also have increased if a given quality differential between candidates mat­tered more to the final outcome. That such a "third" effect might have existed seems plausible from the extensive literature depicting the evolution of U.S. House elections from party-centered to candidate-centered contests. Yet none of the current methodolo­gies for measuring the incumbency advantage separates the total incumbency advantage into direct, scare-off, and quality effects, so that one can assess the relative contribution over time of each component. (Cox and Katz 1995)
      * + - **High ability candidate should do better: I can do het effects by pretreatment quality. Challenger quality is lower in races with incumbents. I can see if this is the case if there is higher winning margin. Ansolasbhere and BDM (2004)**
3. Information based
4. Other
   1. Citizens impressions of accountability institutions. Weaver 2020.
   2. **Ashworth, BDM and Friedenberg (2019): “high reelection rates raise the concern that incumbents use the perquisites of office to insulate themselves from electoral threat”. As noted by Cox and Katz (2002, p. 7) “whenever the resources of public office are used to insulate individual politicians from electoral risk, their accountability to their constituents is weakened… Thus, insulation from electoral risk of the kind suspected would, at a single stroke, debilitate the two fundamental accountability relationships of a democratic system of government.”**