



Complements Not Substitutes? Incumbency and Party Cues in British Elections 1832-2024

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1 Introduction

This report seeks to evaluate the relationship between party and incumbency cues in British elections since 1832. The prevailing view of the literature on this relationship is that they are alternatives to each other, and as one rises the other must fall (Nelson, 1978; Cover, 1977; Jacobson, 2015). Many previous quantitative studies in this field, however, are based on this relationship in the US, where incumbency cues are deemed to be stronger (Ansolabehere et al, 2006; Cox and Katz, 1996), meaning historical analysis does not reflect the effect of gradual enfranchisement and electoral reform witnessed in the UK during the period 1832-2024.

Voting in British parliamentary elections has evolved dramatically over the past two centuries. The advent of mass enfranchisement, faster and more accessible information sharing (Cox, 1987 p30), and permanent transfers of power between political entities (Cox, 1987 pp.113-136) has left electoral patterns warped. The candidate-based system of Victorian voting, where party cues and identification were weaker (Cox, 1984), has been usurped by partisan voting and a focus on national leadership, to the extent that many voters would “vote for a pig if the party put one up” (Butler, 1952 p173). In other words, the candidate has become largely irrelevant.

Considering the above historical shifts in electoral behaviour, this report questions the US-centric prevailing view and its applicability to the British case. I suggest that incumbency and party cues may rise and fall together in the period, suggesting that the ‘substitutes’ hypothesis may not be universally applicable. I then propose a theoretical argument which is consistent with my findings, namely that quickly evolving candidate preferences in a non-partisan environment leave voters cueless and erratic, leading to a lack of decipherable pattern. The addition of strong partisan cues reduces this chaos by controlling the candidate selection process and offering incumbents greater support against better-qualified challengers. In short, I suggest that party and incumbency may be complements rather than substitutes.

By carrying out quantitative regression analysis on a uniquely broad candidate-level dataset of 90,000 entries, this report will allow for greater historical scope than previous studies, covering all parliamentary elections since 1832. Though my theoretical argument is not directly tested in this paper, I am able to shed light upon the fluctuation of party and incumbency cues across the period in a new electoral context, and suggest a possible mechanism.

2 Data and Methodology

2.1 Data

This project has used a candidate-level dataset developed by my supervisor (Umit, 2022) which is uniquely broad in scope, covering all British parliamentary elections in the period 1832-2024. Five variables were extracted from this dataset (henceforth, CLD): candidate vote share, constituency name, candidate name, election year, and region (region being consistent throughout the period). In addition to these, I constructed a binary incumbency indicator for the majority of CLD's 90,000 entries. Much of this data was acquired from another academic dataset (Fouirnaies, 2020) covering the period 1885-2019. This data was transferred to CLD through a process of partially automated record linkage.

By stripping punctuation, reordering words alphabetically, and reformatting entries, conventional matching achieved a 20% success rate. I employed Levenshtein distance matching to increase this (Ristad and Yianilos, 1998), matching entries which were two characters apart, allowing for typos and minor deviations. This decision increased the risk of false matches, and despite the requirement for 50% columns to match exactly, the possibility remains. This trade-off between accuracy and match-rate is common to research (Kaufman and Klevs, 2022), but remains a bias to note. This process matched 70% of candidates, requiring further manual inputting of 30,000 entries which was subsequently carried out. Though introducing the risk of human error, the level of coding required for further automation was not feasible.

As in previous scholarship, 4637 uncontested elections in earlier years were removed from analysis to prevent added bias (Ansolabehere et al, 2006 p10). This does, however, reduce the sample size of earlier data-points and introduces selection bias (Gelman and King, 1990 p1158).

Figure 3 also utilises split-ticket voting counts from taken directly from data presented by Cox (1987 p103) and overlaid in Figure 1.

2.2 Methods for Analysis

Scholars have operationalised partisan voting in many ways, including estimates for split-

ticket voting in the 19th century (Phillips and Wetherell, 1991; Eggers and Spirling, 2014) and averages for party unity in the legislature (Cox, 1987). Though valuable and revealing in their own right, the former measures rely on ballot book data which is not available for much of the period covered by this project, and the latter relies on an intermediate stage which distracts from the variable of interest (Cox 1987, p100).

The operationalisation of partisan voting elected for this project must be consistent and available across the period (1832-2024), leading to the adoption of the R^2 value in an OLS regression for each election year, allowing an estimate for the proportion of variation in vote share which can be attributed to partisan voting at each election.

Regression analysis has precedent in this field using large-scale datasets (Gelman and King, 1990), alongside the use of R^2 or a variation of R^2 to evaluate explanatory power (Bafumi, 2005). I am conscious of R^2 's limitations as a measure of variable impact, particularly in the recent literature. Achen (1982 p59-62) stresses the dangers of inconsistent sample sizes between regressions, while Hanushek and Jackson (1977) are concerned with the accidental measuring of variation caused by changes in the independent variables, as opposed to the desired mechanism.

In this case, the noise caused by changes in independent variables is directly related to the change being measured, partially mitigating concerns. To reduce excess variation, each R^2 is calculated by 'nesting' one regression within another, differing only by removing the variable of interest, in this case party, and calculating the difference in R^2 (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban, 1990). The significance of each data-point is then tested with an F-test (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban, 1990).

Each regression used fixed effects for relevant variables available in the improved dataset, aiming to prevent selection bias and help remove idiosyncrasies in the variables unique to certain elections (Ansolabehere et al, 2006). Region (r), party (p) and the number of candidates standing (n) were used as fixed effects. The latter was included to prevent the skewing of results in the post-war period, as more candidates stood in each con-

stituency causing more variation for challenger candidates. Achen (1982) warns us that ‘ R^2 maximising,’ an arbitrary attempt to increase the value by adding as many controls as possible, is not good statistical practice. As such, each control I have selected intends to avoid the pitfalls of bad controls (Cinelli et al, 2024), and while n does introduce other causal connections, it is required to prevent post-war bias which significantly skewed results. My controls also follow Ansolabehere’s (2006) decomposition of a candidate’s vote share in US state elections, with the addition of regional variation for application in the British environment.

$$y = \alpha_1 r + \alpha_2 n + \alpha_3 p + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

$$y = \alpha_1 r + \alpha_2 n + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

$$R^2(1) - R^2(2) = R_P^2(\text{Diff}) \quad (3)$$

The $R^2(\text{Diff})$ for each year represents the proportion of variation in a candidate’s vote share which can be explained by partisan factors, controlling for the above variables. They were displayed on a scatterplot (Figure 1) with a LOESS line of best fit, illustrating the increase in proportion of vote share variation caused by party. F-tests report the significance of party as a variable in relation to $R^2(\text{Diff})$ and are printed in the appendix.

2.3 On Incumbency

CLD’s new “incumbency” column indicates whether each candidate was running for re-election as an incumbent (1) or challenging the seat (0). This binary column is not found frequently in the literature, and its historical scope allowed incumbency to be included as a fixed effect in regression analysis without the requirement for direct comparison with previous ($t - 1$) elections (Gelman and King, 1990).

As above, fixed-effect regressions were run with a nested R^2 to isolate the variance in vote share caused by incumbency. Incumbency was not added to the regression model for party as a control, as this may introduce bias should there be a causal relationship between the two, which this paper posits (Cinelli et al, 2024).

$$y = \alpha_1 r + \alpha_2 n + \alpha_3 p + \alpha_4 k \quad (4)$$

$$y = \alpha_1 r + \alpha_2 n + \alpha_3 p \quad (5)$$

$$R^2(1) - R^2(2) = R_I^2(\text{Diff}) \quad (6)$$

Though more intricate ways to measure the incumbency effect have been devised, such as measuring the vote share change immediately after a long-serving MP has resigned (retirement slump) and at an MP’s first re-election (sophomore surge) (Alford and Brady, 1988 in Gelman and King, 1990), or through the impact of redistricting in vote share (Ansolabehere, 2000), they were not adopted. These measures are not directly compatible with the CLD, and require more data management and selection than is possible with this project’s given time and resources.

Once again, this represents a trade-off between accuracy and quantity of results. Using incumbency as a fixed effect for all candidates does, however, reduce selection bias by including all available datapoints in analysis.

$R^2(\text{Diff})$ values for incumbency, following fixed effect regressions of the same type as in 2.2, are plotted on Figure 2 with a LOESS line of best fit. Figure 2 splits data by party, plotting a separate $R^2(\text{Diff})$ for each party’s candidates in a given year. This can illustrate which party’s candidates are most affected by incumbency.

To remove unhelpful variation from minor fringe parties which are rarely incumbent, the three main parties have been highlighted on Figure 2. Remaining candidates have been grouped as “other.” Historically Conservative, Labour and Liberal candidates have not stood under the central banner requiring the amalgamation of candidate labels below, in-line with previous scholarship (Cox, 1987 p107).

Party Label Amalgamation	
<i>New Label</i>	<i>Database Labels</i>
Conservative	Tory, Unionists
Labour	Independent Labour Party, Labour and Co-Op, Labour Representation Committee
Liberal	Whigs, Liberal Unionists, Liberal Democrats

While this does leave independents, radicals and Peelites under the category of “other,” their differences on policy and voting mean amalgamation would be inappropriate. The 1918 election has also been omitted as Conservative and Liberal “Coalition” candidates are indistinguishable.

3 Results and Analysis

3.1 Non-Partisan Voting

The initial point of interest presented on Figure 1 is that party affiliation has little to no effect on the variation in a candidate's vote share for most Victorian elections, the R^2 resting in the region of 1%. This finding, that the British electorate was highly non-partisan for the first three quarters of the 19th century, is well documented in the theoretical literature, though reasoning is disputed. A theory presented by John Vincent (1966) cites the rapid increase in affordable periodical publications following the removal of the stamp tax on newspapers in 1855, allowing London-centred parties to disseminate their propaganda to a newly enfranchised and impressionable audience for the first time. This factor would have been most effective when combined with mass enfranchisements, most notably the Second Reform Act 1867. Anthony Downs (1957) differentiates between information which is free to acquire and information which is costly to acquire, with most opting for the former even if the quality of this information is lower. When applied by Cox (1987 p31) this theory becomes relevant, as new voters often lacked the political understanding to critique candidates and policy independently, leading them to rely on easily accessible and *free* cues such as party labels and printed propaganda, rather than spend time and effort acquiring the required understanding and critical thinking.

Given further that the new 'penny press' was highly partisan with there being "no demand for a paper unconnected with an official party" (Vincent, 1966 p61), there seems to be clear theoretical reasoning for an increase in partisanship: When offered the choice between free information direct from parties and the partisan press, and costly information from independent analysis, most new (and many old) voters opted for the former, exposing the electorate to factionalised political information from the outset.

Applying this theory to Figure 1, however, questions its validity. Following the Newspapers Act 1855, the circulation of provincial periodicals rose from 10,000 copies in 1854 to 340,000,000 in 1864, and yet the period 1855-1875 sees little measurable increase in partisanship according to the model. Though shifts

will admittedly not be immediate, to observe no change over the course of five general elections (an increase of just 0.01%) indicates that increased newspaper circulation may not be the primary cause of increased partisanship, particularly given that Vincent's (1966) data suggests a rapid rise in consumption and influence.

A second view expressed in the literature is that the transition of power and responsibility away from backbench MPs and towards the cabinet and Prime Minister has led to the treatment of elections as referenda on public policy (Wald, 1983). The 'loss of the legislative initiative' by parliament to the executive leads to the shifting of public opinion and focus towards cabinet figures, seeing them no longer as simply administrators of the policy decided upon by parliament as a collective, but as chief legislators, dominating both the crafting and execution of that policy (Cox, 1984; Cox, 1987).

Though, unlike Vincent's (1966) proposal, no specific date can be attributed to this gradual shift in parliamentary power, Cox (1987) identifies a useful relationship between the unity of parliamentary parties and the frequency of split-ticket voting in British double member constituencies, a proxy for partisanship. If backbenchers have a significant policy role, they are less likely to collectively fall in line behind their party leadership, which in turn correlates to a decrease in split-ticket voting. Overlaying Cox's (1987) data with Figure 1 produces Figure 3 which, while possessing a delay between a fall in split-ticket voting and a certain rise in partisanship, illustrates that the crossover point coincides with 1880, the first election since 1832 at which the R^2 difference produced by party is significant at the 1% level.

1832 remains an outlier election in this sense, given the unusually partisan divide between Whigs and Tories carried over from the 1831 election which became a referendum on the issue of electoral reform (Phillips and Wetherell, 1991 pp.636-637). Policy independence is unsurprisingly strongest in the decade after the Peelite split, which embedded a sense of honour in parliamentary divisions, making it 'fashionable' to vote with one's conscience as opposed to one's party (Jones and Erickson, 1972 pp.222-223).

The third major view reflected in the literature coincides with the formalisation of local party structures and

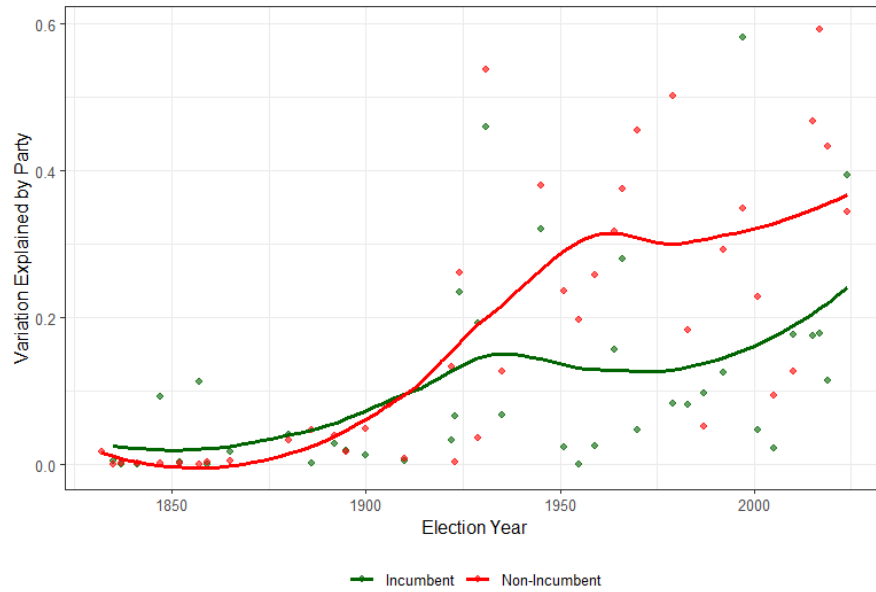


Figure 1: Additional variation in candidate vote share associated with party affiliation, split by incumbency status

Note: Y-axis displays the R^2 value for party, calculated as a fixed effect

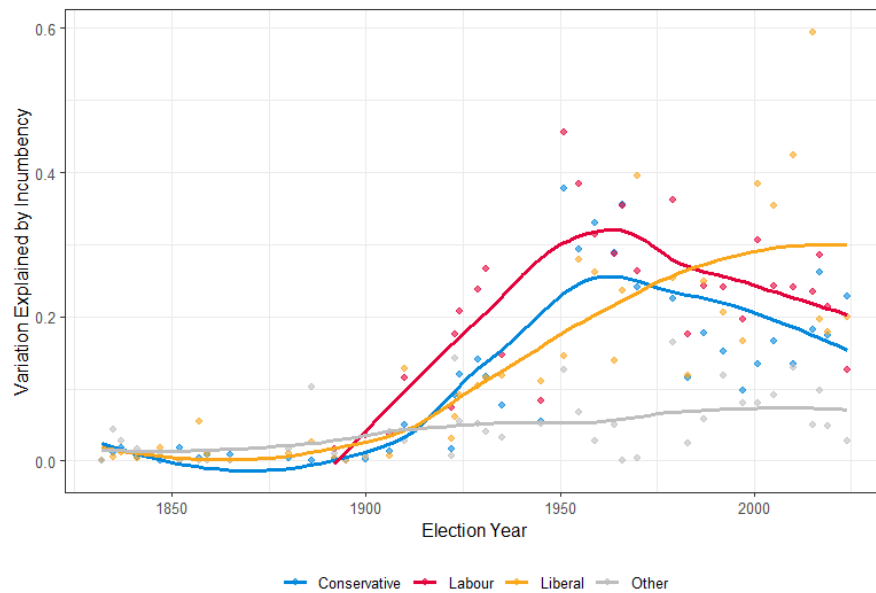


Figure 2: Additional variation in candidate vote share associated with incumbency status, split by party affiliation

Note: Y-axis displays the R^2 value for incumbency, calculated as a fixed effect

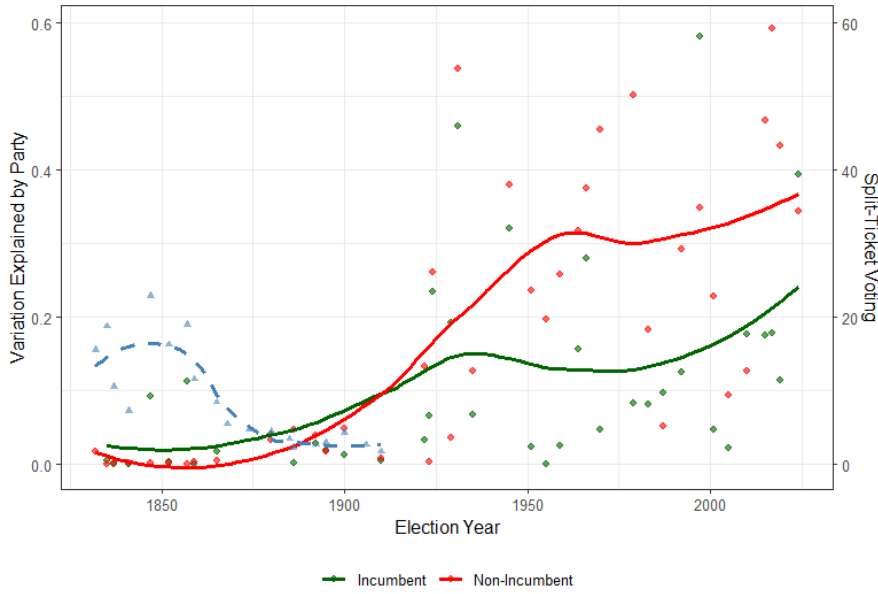


Figure 3: Figure 1 overlaid with split-ticket voting data

Note: Split-ticket voting data taken from Cox (1987 p103)

organisations (Ostrogorski, 1902). This makes theoretical sense, as local associations were typically more loyal to party leadership, thus encouraging candidates to adopt a party line.

The adoption of association-based campaigning also helped form two candidates of the same party standing in a double-member district into a ‘ticket,’ campaigning in support of each other as opposed to campaigning only for oneself.

Phillips and Wetherell (1991) note in their study of Shrewsbury’s ballot books that despite over 50% of voters splitting their vote or ‘plumping’ in a non-partisan way in the early 19th century, it took until 1841 for two Tory candidates to campaign as a dual ticket. This occurrence helpfully coincides with the rise of local Conservative associations under Peel (Eggers and Spirling, 2014), and supports the theoretical view put forward by Carey and Shugart (1995) that single-member first-past-the-post electoral systems offer the least incentive for candidates to persuade the electorate to choose based on the individual as opposed to the party. By campaigning on a ticket, both candidates are effectively opting in to this system.

Testing the three major theories as to the low R^2 value for party against this project’s model, the decline in status of individual MPs

appears the most congruent. Matching against the reduction in split-ticket voting and against party unity in the Commons displays a narrative of falling influence and power, reflected in the constituencies by focusing on the affairs of Westminster and of the executive, as opposed to local issues and candidate quality. Though the role of party organisation should not be understated, the R^2 value begins its upward trajectory before associations were widely operational. Despite success stories of partisan alignment such as the Birmingham Liberal Association, founded in 1865 and unexpectedly winning all three Birmingham seats, a majority of constituencies, particularly counties for the Liberals and boroughs for the Conservatives, lacked active local associations until later in the century (Ball, 1981 pp.21-23).

3.2 The Lull of Incumbency

Party and incumbency cues have very different origins, and are often seen as competing with one another in the minds of voters. It is intuitive to expect an increase in party-based voting behaviours to precipitate a decrease in the incumbency effect, as one substitutes the other. This logical reasoning is well documented in the literature and possesses clear logic: As voters

replace costly incumbency/candidate cues with easily accessible party cues, the emphasis they place on candidate-level factors will decrease, making them substitutes rather than complements (Nelson, 1978 p677).

Figure 2 indicates that for all parties, the incumbency effect was very small, or even negative, for candidates in most of the 19th century, being below 5% until 1910. This contradicts previous expectations that as partisan voting was minimal in this period, the incumbency effect should be larger as its substitute.

Eggers and Spirling (2014) discuss this finding, suggesting that rapidly changing voter preferences regarding candidate characteristics may explain the lack of an incumbency effect and the success of challenger candidates in the 19th century. As more voters are enfranchised and the electorate's tastes change, incumbent candidates are stuck operating with "yesterday's model," campaigning for a second time but with characteristics which are now out of fashion. Eggers and Spirling (2014) use the example of candidates with aristocratic titles, with the proportion of titled MPs falling from over 20% in the 1840s to under 5% by the 1880s (Eggers and Spirling, 2014 p31). The increasing unfavourability of titled candidates in an age of mass enfranchisement of the general population is a prime example of the electorate's changing tastes, offering an incumbency disadvantage to aristocratic MPs.

Whilst incumbents suffer from an inability to adapt as the electorate changes around them, challenger candidates can choose to field themselves in a constituency which better suits their characteristics, and astute potential candidates with fashionable characteristics may seize the opportunity to stand in the right place.

In an age of increasing electorate size and education, the strengthening of the candidate pool may contribute to this effect, as challengers will always possess the advantage of time. If the quality of candidates has increased markedly within the five years since the incumbent was elected, then the challenger may outperform the incumbent purely on the basis of quality. In such a case, a voter selecting candidates based upon local quality alone with little influence from party cues should logically select the challenger. Eggers and Spirling (2014 pp.13-15) suggest that the 19th century was one such period in which the candidate pool in-

creased in quality year-on-year, placing incumbents at a quality disadvantage.

Until the formalisation of candidate selection procedures (Lovenduski, 2016), British elections allowed something of a free market for candidates, even more potent considering the increasing numbers of men eligible to stand (Eggers and Spirling, 2014), allowing the continual strengthening of the candidate pool as discussed. I conclude, therefore, that my findings illustrated in Figure 2 of minimal incumbency effect are consistent with theoretical accounts in the form of rapidly changing voter preferences in the 19th century alongside the strengthening of the candidate pool.

3.3 Incumbency and Party Rise Together

Having developed a theoretical grounding for the first portion of Figures 1 and 2, I now look to the turn of the 20th century, where the R^2 values for both incumbency and party voting rise similarly. Much like Ansolabehere (2006) in his study of Minnesotan state elections, this paper finds that an increase in party voting is correlated and theoretically linked with an increase in the incumbency effect. From 1900-50, R_P^2 increased from 8% to 30%, whilst R_I^2 increased from 4% to 30%. The transition from campaigning primarily on local issues to those of national importance remains crucial in explaining these numerical shifts, a transition which would remain in place through to the end of the century (Ball, 1981 p14; Denver et al, 2003). The rise in partisan voting has been discussed in 3.1, but its relationship with the rise in the incumbency effect, in this case as an advantage, remains theoretically unjustified. This justification is central to my suggestion that partisan voting and incumbency may be complements rather than substitutes in this period.

As previously discussed, the inability of candidates and selection committees to keep up with changing electoral preferences and demands goes a long way to explaining the irrelevance and, at times, disadvantage brought by incumbency to candidates in the 19th century. Unlike the 21st century where candidate selection procedures are tightly controlled by party headquarters and officials (Lovenduski, 2016), the 1800s witnessed a period of "impotence"

for central party structures, where local party leaders were “sovereign authorities within their own domain,” and free to select candidates in any way they wished (Hanham, 1959 p347). Notable cases of local party supremacy include the refusal of the Mid-Lanark Liberal Association to nominate Keir Hardie, future leader of the Independent Labour Party, as their candidate despite instructions to do so from national leaders, demonstrating an inability of national leaders to influence candidate selection even towards the end of the 19th century (Ball, 1981 p45). This weak and varied candidate selection procedure prevents parties from best positioning candidates of higher quality, and supporting incumbents with re-election bids. This introduces my theoretical argument, that high-quality and centralised candidate-selection processes increase the incumbency effect. This centralisation should not be confused with Ostrogorski’s (1902) theory relating to strong local associations, as centralisation takes power and autonomy away from these associations. Since parties tend to be more centralised during periods of high partisan voting, the two are complements under the above circumstances.

This view is consistent with the failure of the Conservative incumbency effect to rise above the 1832 level until its candidate-selection processes had returned to centralised impartiality (See Figure 2). From the end of the 19th century until 1913, the Conservatives were bitterly divided over the issue of Tariff Reform, which led to the party’s central organs being divided between the factions. The Tariff Reformers captured the National Union and forced pro-reform candidates on many associations (Ball, 1981 p55). This major split led to a succession of electoral failures and, following my theoretical argument, contributed to the lack of an incumbency effect observed on Figure 2 in this period. Therefore, this case suggests that when parties cannot organise their candidates on a national level, or select the highest quality candidates unhindered by factional interference, the incumbency effect may be reduced.

In a multiparty system, such as Britain following the rise of the Labour Party and demise of the Liberals in the inter-war period, incumbency and partisan voting are linked through a second theoretical mechanism. Third parties and those anticipating a lower vote share in

some constituencies suffer the problem of being perceived as a ‘wasted vote.’ Having an incumbent candidate in the constituency or nearby signals to party-aligned voters that voting for them is feasible and justified. This factor is particularly relevant for the Liberal Party for much of the 20th century (Eggers and Spirling, 2017 p916), and the existence of Liberal incumbents can discourage tactical voting on the part of Liberal supporters, a potential explanatory factor of the Liberal incumbency effect rising beyond the Labour and Conservative peaks in the 1950s and into the 21st century (Eggers and Spirling, 2017).

3.4 Conclusion

The principal finding from this project is that incumbency and party cues both become more important to vote share across the period 1832-2024. I account for this conclusion by suggesting a theoretical relationship between partisan voting and the incumbency effect, united by the professionalisation and centralisation of the candidate selection process. While the decline in status of individual MPs and the transfer of legislative power to the cabinet has contributed starkly to the rise in party voting, alongside an expansion of the franchise, this paper finds that incumbency is not negatively correlated with this trend, being positively correlated instead. While the prospect of both rising together does not indicate a conclusive relationship in itself, the theoretical analysis this paper has attempted has provided one suitable explanation and connection.

Building upon the conclusions of Eggers and Spirling (2014), that the inability of incumbents to respond to rapidly changing voter preferences and an improving candidate pool explains the 19th century incumbency disadvantage, I conclude that the rise in the R^2 value for the incumbency effect may be driven in part by a centrally organised candidate selection procedure. Bolstering support for incumbents where local parties have failed, and making selection processes more meritocratic ensures the best candidate for the region and job are put forward, thus increasing the quality of incumbents across the board to face challengers of increasing quality. I offer this theoretical argument not as conclusive proof, but as a potential justification of my findings which deviate from the

expectations of the literature.

Incumbency and party cues are therefore suggested to be complements, increasing together throughout the period, rather than substitutes as previously and intuitively thought. It is, however, important to note that though this is a plausible theoretical model consistent with my findings, this paper does not directly test the mechanism statistically, necessitating further study in this area.

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A F-Stat Table (Party)

Contribution of Party Affiliation to Vote Share 1832-2024					
Year	R^2 (Without Party)	R^2 (With Party)	ΔR^2	F-Stat	Significant
1832	0.377	0.395	0.018	16.68	***
1835	0.481	0.482	0.001	0.84	
1837	0.558	0.560	0.002	2.55	
1841	0.545	0.547	0.002	1.65	
1847	0.365	0.367	0.002	0.87	
1852	0.448	0.450	0.002	1.64	
1857	0.486	0.487	0.000	0.12	
1859	0.459	0.464	0.004	2.82	
1865	0.476	0.481	0.005	4.86	*
1880	0.545	0.579	0.034	59.20	***
1886	0.371	0.419	0.048	39.89	***
1892	0.323	0.363	0.040	20.18	***
1895	0.420	0.438	0.017	37.64	***
1900	0.466	0.515	0.049	23.46	***
1906	0.389	0.472	0.082	53.51	***
1910	0.313	0.322	0.009	9.27	***
1922	0.324	0.457	0.133	103.77	***
1923	0.373	0.378	0.005	3.16	*
1924	0.269	0.530	0.261	213.91	***
1929	0.128	0.164	0.036	24.75	***
1931	0.133	0.670	0.537	482.06	***
1935	0.259	0.387	0.128	76.79	***
1945	0.162	0.542	0.380	439.39	***
1951	0.315	0.551	0.236	176.97	***
1955	0.303	0.501	0.198	152.10	***
1959	0.274	0.532	0.258	234.44	***
1964	0.169	0.487	0.318	311.64	***
1966	0.178	0.553	0.375	403.51	***
1970	0.133	0.587	0.455	573.28	***
1979	0.008	0.510	0.502	663.49	***
1983	0.030	0.213	0.184	140.28	***
1987	0.045	0.097	0.053	30.60	***
1992	0.033	0.326	0.293	314.14	***
1997	0.046	0.395	0.349	447.77	***
2001	0.048	0.277	0.229	218.19	***
2005	0.013	0.107	0.095	73.38	***
2010	0.032	0.159	0.127	107.13	***
2015	0.041	0.509	0.468	652.90	***
2017	0.013	0.606	0.593	1012.64	***
2019	0.028	0.462	0.433	553.35	***
2024	0.041	0.386	0.345	403.06	***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

B F-Stat Table (Incumbency)

Contribution of Incumbency Status to Vote Share 1832-2024					
Year	R^2 (Without Inc)	R^2 (With Inc)	ΔR^2	F-Stat	Significant
1835	0.343	0.355	0.012	10.37	**
1837	0.442	0.459	0.017	20.23	***
1841	0.437	0.443	0.006	5.15	*
1847	0.257	0.261	0.004	1.89	
1852	0.255	0.266	0.011	7.39	**
1857	0.306	0.336	0.030	17.64	***
1859	0.472	0.484	0.012	10.93	**
1865	0.457	0.458	0.001	1.01	
1880	0.525	0.533	0.009	16.89	***
1886	0.390	0.400	0.010	11.15	***
1892	0.314	0.314	0.000	0.43	
1895	0.328	0.329	0.000	0.22	
1900	0.376	0.378	0.001	1.57	
1906	0.393	0.404	0.011	17.38	***
1910	0.231	0.342	0.111	322.37	***
1922	0.442	0.497	0.055	123.42	***
1923	0.366	0.516	0.150	401.78	***
1924	0.487	0.633	0.146	508.33	***
1929	0.226	0.453	0.227	655.03	***
1931	0.593	0.734	0.141	529.80	***
1935	0.443	0.537	0.094	226.50	***
1945	0.535	0.599	0.064	219.15	***
1951	0.374	0.708	0.333	1368.36	***
1955	0.364	0.650	0.285	997.62	***
1959	0.471	0.716	0.245	1153.50	***
1964	0.498	0.713	0.215	1125.56	***
1966	0.517	0.758	0.241	1515.78	***
1970	0.549	0.722	0.173	960.76	***
1974	0.354	0.467	0.113	382.91	***
1979	0.499	0.731	0.232	1563.49	***
1983	0.223	0.443	0.221	616.34	***
1987	0.171	0.537	0.366	1228.08	***
1992	0.270	0.600	0.330	1098.39	***
1997	0.357	0.555	0.198	590.62	***
2001	0.242	0.605	0.363	1173.64	***
2005	0.129	0.491	0.362	889.88	***
2010	0.138	0.505	0.367	1396.47	***
2015	0.487	0.762	0.275	2194.25	***
2017	0.591	0.814	0.223	2262.95	***
2019	0.491	0.726	0.235	1614.65	***
2024	0.394	0.556	0.162	689.84	***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.