Seniority-based Nominations and Political Careers[*]

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Abstract

This paper investigates party use of seniority systems to allocate nominations for elected and appointed offices. Such systems, which can regulate party members' access to offices at multiple levels of their careers, are defined by two main rules or norms: an incumbent renomination norm, and a seniority progression norm. Using comprehensive electoral and candidate data from Norwegian local and national elections from 2003-2017, we find systematic patterns consistent with these two norms. Our work illuminates an institutional aspect of candidate selection that the current literature has ignored, while noting some of the important consequences of seniority-based nominations for party cohesion and stability.

Keywords: seniority systems; political selection; returns to office.

JEL Classification: D72

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1. Introduction

Political selection involves many dimensions, such as who initially becomes a candidate for office, who wins, the extent to which winners retain their positions (static ambition), and the extent to which winners seek higher positions (progressive ambition). Recently, access to high-dimensional administrative data has allowed researchers to provide better answers to some classic questions about political selection, often focusing on the net result of the selection processes just noted. For example, are winning candidates richer or more educated than the population at large? Do elections select on merit, somehow defined (Dal Bó et al. (2017))?[1]What determines the career progression of an individual politician?

In this paper, we use comprehensive electoral and candidate data from both local and national elections to explore political selection in Norway. We depart from the existing literature, both in political economy and political science, in our focus on political seniority systems.

As we define them, seniority procedures are methods of selection that prioritize prior experience holding political office. More specifically, we argue seniority systems consist of two components: an "incumbent re-nomination norm," whereby any incumbent in good standing will be re-nominated (if they wish); and a "seniority progression rule," whereby open nominations (those with no incumbent claiming them) will be allocated preferentially to party members currently holding pre-defined feeder offices. Together, these rules help create a career path within the party, such that nominations are merito-cratic for entry-level jobs (for which no feeder offices exist) but then become more (or no less) seniority-based as one moves up in the hierarchy of offices. In contrast to previous studies of seniority systems – which focus on the allocation of appointive offices, such as committee chairs (e.g. Epstein et al., 1997; McKelvey and Riezman, 1992; Muthoo and

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[1]Other participants in the "administrative data revolution" include Dancygier et al. (2015), Hyytinen et al. (2018) and Oskarsson et al. (2018), and a spate of papers, including Bhusal et al. (2019) Dahlgaard et al. (2019) and Thompson et al. (2019), directly inspired by Dal Bó et al. (2017).

Shepsle, 2014) – we investigate whether parties use seniority to allocate nominations for elective office(s).

Seniority procedures for selecting nominees to elective offices have several important consequences. For example, accrued seniority increases a politician's value of remaining in his/her party, rather than switching to another. Unless a switcher's seniority will be "honored," s/he must accept a demotion in order to join a new party. Thus, seniority systems can help build more stable parties. Relatedly, stripping a member of his/her seniority is a significant threat that only parties running seniority systems can deploy. Thus, seniority systems can help build more disciplined parties.

Our aims in this paper are as follows. First, we hope to put a question on the scholarly agenda. While there is an extensive comparative literature on candidate selection and recruitment, standard surveys (e.g. Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Norris, 1997) do not mention the possibility that parties use seniority systems in allocating their nominations. Although the study of seniority systems is well established in legislative studies, it is remarkably absent from electoral studies. Second, we hope to provide methods that can be used to identify whether seniority systems are in place in closed-list systems. The challenge is that nominations allocated by "merit" (variously defined) might look like those allocated by seniority. For example, an incumbent might earn re-nomination by virtue of being a higher-quality candidate than his/her likely competitors, rather than by virtue of being credited by party nominating committees for his/her seniority. Third, we apply the methods we develop to the country of Norway, a case with detailed data that allows us to empirically test these competing claims.

To pursue the aims just articulated, we first model an abstract office hierarchy in a closed-list proportional representation (PR) electoral system, then provide a detailed look at political careers in Norway in the period 1945-2019. To assess whether Norwegian parties follow seniority norms, we focus on several "incremental moves" that a Norwegian politician might traditionally seek, such as promotion from local councilor to mayor, promotion from mayor to a spot on the parliamentary list, and re-nomination to

3

a winnable spot on the parliamentary list (should such a position be obtained). In order to accomplish any of these moves in a closed-list system, it is crucial to secure an appropriate nomination spot (as we explain further below). In Norway, we consistently find patterns that would be expected under seniority progression (or re-nomination). We use both panel regressions and regression discontinuity (RD) designs to improve our ability to address issues of causality.

After providing some evidence that Norwegian politicians are very stably attached to their parties, as would be expected if those parties followed seniority norms, we consider some of the opportunities that parties can offer to their members late in their careers (such as cabinet posts and "revolving door" positions). We also examine two key challenges to our analysis—one inferential (can one distinguish seniority from skill acquisition?) and one theoretical (can parties credibly commit to following seniority rules?).

2. Office and Nomination Hierarchies

Throughout the paper, we use as a running example a country in which only three types of elective political office exist: local council seats, intermediate posts such as mayoralties, and national parliamentary seats. The values of these seats are denoted $V_L < V_I < V_N$, where the subscripts indicate the level (local, intermediate, national). This three-level example suffices to illustrate a hierarchy of elective offices. In principle, office hierarchies can also include intra-legislative posts (e.g., committee chairs), executive posts (e.g., cabinet portfolios), and private sector posts (e.g., positions on corporate boards or in lobbying firms).

Continuing with our three-level example, we assume that seats at the local and national levels are filled via closed-list PR elections. Moreover, for simplicity we shall assume that only hopeless and safe list positions exist. Candidates with hopeless positions are sure to lose, while those with safe positions are sure to win. Thus, nomination to a hopeless spot is worth nothing (in the current period), while nomination to a safe local (resp.,

national) spot is worth V_L (resp., V_N).

Given these simplifying assumptions, a generic politician in a particular party can progress through the following five stages, which we call the "nomination hierarchy":

1. Being nominated to a losing position on the local list
2. Being nominated to a winning position on the local list
3. Being nominated to an intermediate post
4. Being nominated to a losing position on the national list
5. Being nominated to a winning position on the national list

Nomination to a losing position on the national list typically does not require the candidate to surrender their current office. For example, mayors may run on the parliamentary list and continue serving if they do not win. It is for this reason that we put nomination to a losing spot on the national list higher than nominations to lower offices.

We characterize the process that a generic party uses to choose its nominees as follows. First, each potential nominee j is given an overall score, $S_j = (1 - \sigma)q_j + \sigma s_j$. Here, q_j denotes j's ability or quality, while s_j represents j's "seniority score," which depends on the highest office j has held and for how long. For example, the party might rank its members by seniority within each office and assign larger scores to those higher in the seniority ranking. The overall score, S_j, is then a weighted average of the candidate's quality and seniority with weight $\sigma \in [0, 1]$ on seniority and weight $1 - \sigma$ on quality.

Second, the probability π_{jk} that candidate j wins, when competing against candidate k for a particular nomination, is given by a contest success function (Skaperdas, 1996):

$$\pi_{jk} = \frac{S_j^\alpha}{S_j^\alpha + S_k^\alpha} \tag{1}$$

Depending on the values of the weight σ and the exponent α, this formula can represent procedures that award nominations strictly on the basis of seniority ($\alpha \to \infty, \sigma = 1$), strictly on the basis of quality ($\alpha \to \infty, \sigma = 0$), or on the basis of both seniority and quality. Moreover, the formula can be extended to cover cases in which more than two candidates compete for a given nomination in the nomination hierarchy.

How much nominations based on quality and those based on seniority would differ depends on the distribution of quality in the candidate pool. If all candidates have the same quality, then the correlation between quality and seniority (q_j and s_j) will be zero and it will be relatively easy to tell whether seniority procedures are in use or not. In contrast, if quality varies across candidates, then quality and seniority (q_j and s_j) will be positively correlated (since higher-quality candidates are more likely to win nominations and offices), making it harder to detect whether seniority per se weighs in the nomination decision. Our analyses deal with this through RD designs.

However, RD designs mainly help if q_j is a fixed characteristic of each candidate j. If instead q_{jt} varies over time, and represents the human capital j has accrued as of time t, then human capital and seniority will be highly correlated. Each term a politician serves in a particular office will both increase their seniority and develop their skills as a politician. It is thus harder to tell whether nominations are awarded based on skills or on seniority. We return to this issue in Section 5.

The quantitative methods we use to detect seniority systems complement qualitative approaches, such as examining the written rules (if any) governing a party's nomination process. Even when written rules exist and are available to scholars, a question remains as to how strictly they are followed; our methods can answer that question.

3. The Office and Nomination Hierarchies in Norway

Having described an abstract hierarchy in a closed-list system, we introduce the case of Norway, upon which most of our empirical analysis will focus. Norway is a likely country in which to observe a seniority system not only because it uses list-based PR but also because its parties have lasted a long enough time to develop such systems. Our analysis may also speak to a broader set of cases, as 40 of 43 European countries use some form of party-list PR to elect their national politicians. By focusing on the Norwegian case, we hope to contribute a set of techniques useful in identifying whether seniority systems

are in place, as well as to discuss some of the substantive issues that such systems raise.

3.1 *Main features of our empirical case*

Like many European countries, Norway's political hierarchy features directly elected politicians at the stages proposed in the hierarchy of elective offices: local (municipal and regional councils), intermediate (mayoral office), and of course national office. Near the top of Norway's office hierarchy lies the *Storting*, a unicameral parliament with 169 members elected for four-year terms using closed-list PR. The government consists of the Prime Minister, who in turn heads the *Statsråd* (Council of State, or cabinet). The number of cabinet ministers has varied, depending on the number of parties in the governing coalition; the most recent cabinet, formed in 2019, made history as the largest cabinet with 22 members.

At the bottom are the local councils (*kommunestyre*) with, on average, 25 members elected for four-year terms. Local elections are staggered, so that they occur two years before (or after) parliamentary elections. Based on suggestions from parties, each local council elects various intermediate officers: a mayor (*ordfører*), a deputy mayor (*varaordfører*), and an executive board (*Formannsskapet*) (all of whom are elected councilors). Municipalities are small (the median population is 4,000, the average 10,000) but have the responsibility for key welfare services, such as child care, schooling, and elderly care, and employ about 17% of the labor force. As a result, local office is perceived to be an important stepping stone to the national arena.

Norway also features a set of regional councils, existing as a component of sub-national government. However, regional governments do not feature as part of our main empirical analysis, for a number of reasons. First, they have much more limited responsibilities and employ a much smaller fraction (2%) of the labor force. The majority of social services and public goods provision are provided by local councils, making regional politicians relatively weak and the job of municipal politician much less prestigious. Second, and relatedly, regional elections in Norway are often seen as "second-order" elections that

that receive little media attention and voters perceive as much less important (e.g. Ervik, 2012; Johansson and Wettergren Mortenberg, 2013). As serving in a regional council is a source of experience and potentially skill, we include this information in our descriptive figures. But as a result, we focus primarily on analyzing seniority progression from local to national office.

Empirically, we can look at how career progression from local to national operates over time. Figure 1 demonstrates that a high proportion of parliamentarians have prior experience in either local or regional office. Most political careers begin at the local or regional level, with relatively few beginning at the parliamentary level. Candidates that have experience from both sub-national offices tend to start their career at the local level (see Appendix Figure A.1).

Figure 1: Fraction of candidates with political experience from local and regional office before entering Parliament for the first time
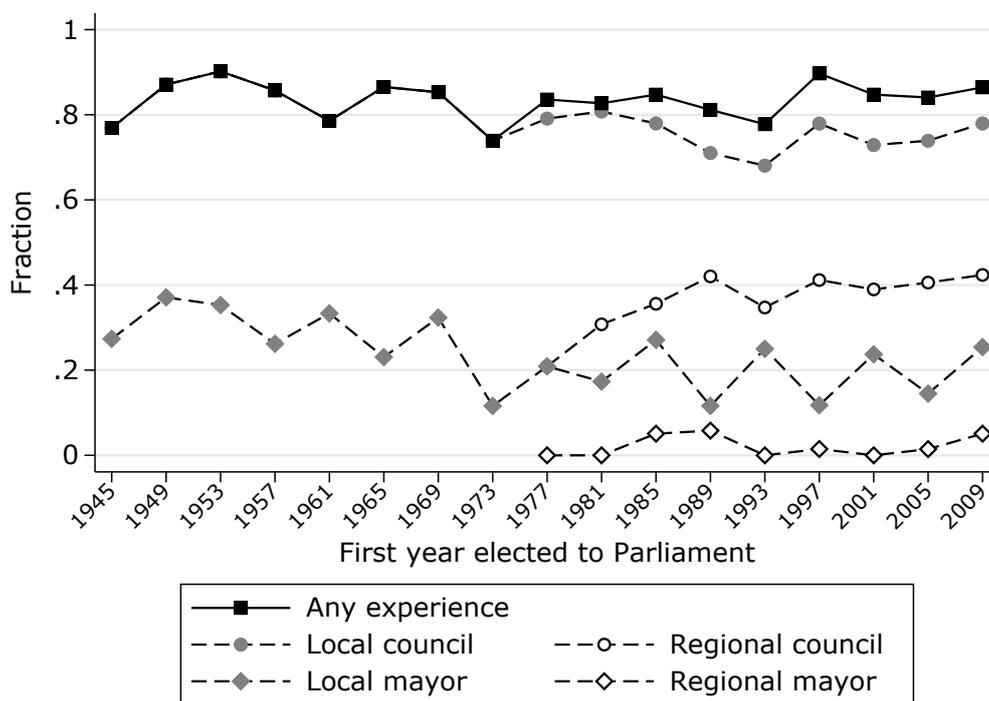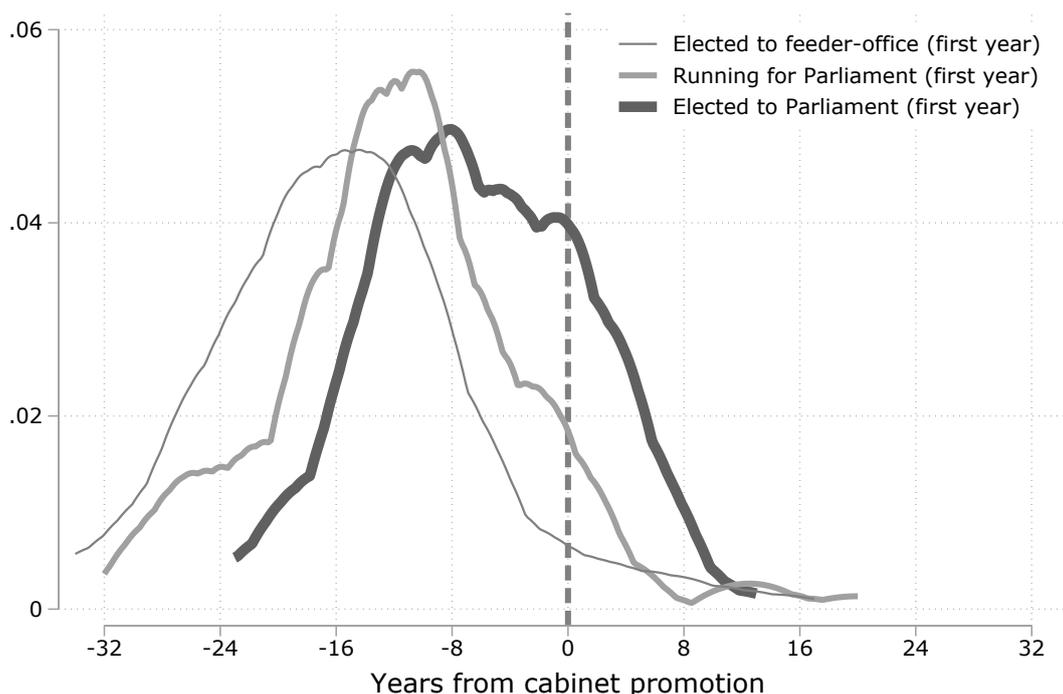

Note: Sample is restricted to candidates winning a seat in parliament for the first time in the 1945-2009 period (N=1,077). Direct elections for the regional office are first held in 1975.

Also, if we consider the background of individuals that reach the very top of the

political system — cabinet members — the descriptive pattern is consistent with seniority-based promotions. For example, among the individuals promoted to cabinet for the first time in the 1980-2009 period (N=136), 74% were previously elected to a feeder office (local or regional council, or mayor). Typically, decades have lapsed between the start of the political career and first-time promotion to cabinet, as illustrated by the thin line in the kernel density plot of Figure 2. The vertical line at zero represents first-time promotion to cabinet; for example, -8 means that the candidate first was elected to local office 8 years before being promoted to cabinet for the first time. The thicker lines in Figure 2 illustrate that there is typically also a considerable time-lag from first-time running (winning) in national elections and promotions to cabinet. Among the candidates promoted to cabinet in the 1980-2009 period, 88% ever run for parliament and 74% are ever elected.

Figure 2: Kernel density plots describing cabinet members political career

Note: Sample is restricted to candidates being promoted to cabinet for the first time in the 1980-2009 period (N=136). We base the kernel density plots on individuals that respectively ever are elected to a feeder office (N=104), ever are running for national office (N=120), and ever are winning a seat in parliament (N=101).

3.2 Research questions

In our main empirical analyses, we investigate the extent to which Norway's main parties advance their members through a seniority hierarchy. To clarify our research questions we rely on Figure 3. Our first research question (**RQ1**) is whether winning a local council election (for the first time) improves a candidate's chance of advancing at the local level. We are primarily interested in the candidate's chances of winning the prestigious mayoral position, but we also consider future election to the executive board / deputy mayor. As being listed first on the local list of the largest party is virtually the only way to become mayor, our first question is similar to asking whether local winning boosts a politician's chance of being put at the top of their party's list.

The second research question (**RQ2**) is whether those who become mayors are more likely to be placed on their party's parliamentary list (in either a hopeless or safe spot). As with RQ1, this concerns what we have called seniority progression. The third research question (**RQ3**) is whether those who are elected to parliament (for the first time) are more likely to secure a winnable spot in the next election, as an incumbent re-nomination rule would dictate. Finally, we also consider how winning a seat in parliament affects a candidate's chances of ever being promoted to cabinet (**RQ4**).

Our research questions cover some of the more important and commonly traveled steps in the Norwegian office hierarchy. Collectively, they suffice to address the over-arching questions motivating our study: do seniority systems regulate the allocation of nominations in closed-list systems, how could we tell if they did, both in general and in the specific case of Norway?

3.3 Parties, nomination procedures and electoral rules

Local, regional, and national elections in Norway are all dominated by seven political parties, which can be classified as belonging to the left-leaning socialist camp (Labor Party; Socialist Left Party) or the right-leaning conservative camp (Center Party; Christian

Figure 3: Illustration of the Norwegian nomination hierarchy
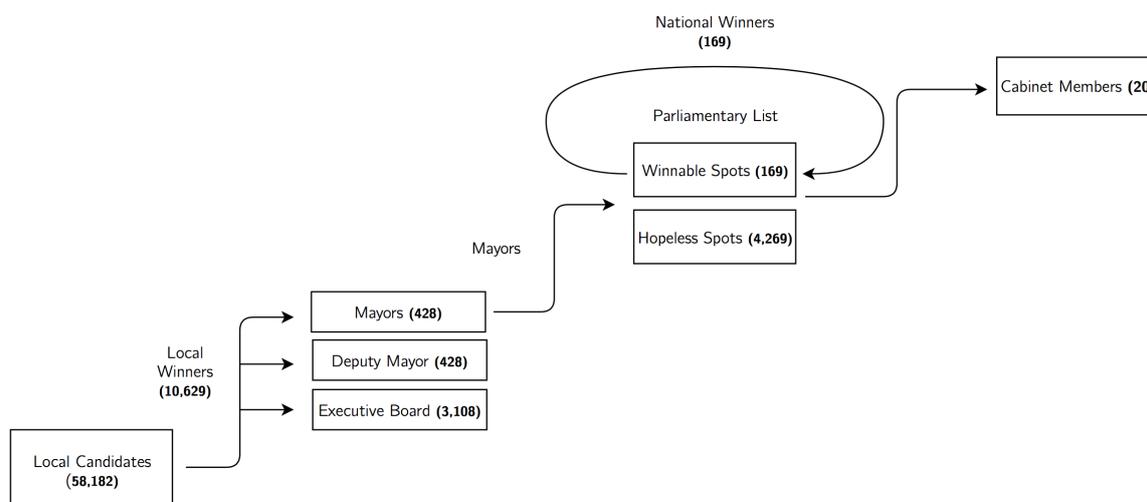
Note: The figure illustrates the Norwegian nomination hierarchy, emphasizing steps relevant to our empirical application. Numbers in parentheses reflect the number of candidates/seats/positions/spots available in the most recent local government election (2015) or national election (2017). The number of cabinet positions vary within each administration; to be consistent with our sample, here we use the size of the cabinet for 2015.

Peoples' Party; Liberal Party; Conservative Party; Progress Party).[2]

At the national level, candidate nominations and rank positions are determined within each election district by dues-paying party delegates at nominating conventions (Valen et al., 2002). The nomination procedure has been characterized as closed (Narud and Valen, 2007). At the local level, the nomination procedures are somewhat more open. For example, Christensen et al. (2008) conduct an analysis of 43 nomination processes and find some disagreement in about half of them.

At the local level, a nomination committee is typically established by the party organization to recruit candidates for the election list. The committee typically proceeds as follows (Ringkjøb and Aars, 2010):

1. Ask current incumbents if they want re-election
2. Ask previous candidates if they want re-nomination
3. Ask local party members if they would like to run
4. Ask other party sympathizers if they would like to run

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[2]The Center Party has in recent years sided with the left-wing parties at the national level. At the very end of our period, the Greens and Reds began to win parliamentary seats as well.

The first rule suggests that incumbent re-nomination is the norm at the local level.

The final party ballot is usually decided at a nomination meeting, typically open to all local party members. Parties have the possibility to give certain candidates an increased share of the poll (25% of the total number of votes received by the party ($PartyVotes$)). Candidates with such a pre-advantage are listed at the top of the ballot paper in boldface.[3]

Voters may cast personal votes for candidates on any party list. Together with candidates' pre-advantage status, the number of personal votes yields the personal poll that forms the basis of the within-party distribution of seats.[4]

$$Poll_{il} = \begin{cases} PersonalVotes_i & \text{if } i \text{ has no pre-advantage} \\ PersonalVotes_i + 0.25 \cdot PartyVotes_l & \text{if } i \text{ has a pre-advantage for list } l \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

Not surprisingly given the formula just explained, pre-advantage status is often decisive for the within-party allocation of seats, giving parties substantial control over who gets elected. Thus, even at the local level, Norwegian parties can offer two types of nomination – a pre-advantaged spot at the top of the list; and a non-advantaged spot at the bottom of the list. List position on the regional and national lists is even more determinative of a candidate's chances.

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[3]Parties can choose not to give any candidates a pre-advantage. The maximum number of candidates a party can give a pre-advantage (max) is determined by the local council size (CS):

- $11 \leq CS < 25 \rightarrow max = 4$
- $25 \leq CS < 55 \rightarrow max = 6$
- $55 \leq CS \rightarrow max = 10$

This restriction is not binding for most party lists. In our sample, the median number of candidates with a pre-advantage is 2. CS is chosen by the previous local council (within the first three years of the election period), but the minimum council size (CS_{min}) depends on municipality population size (pop):

- $pop < 5,000 \rightarrow CS_{min} = 11$
- $5,000 \leq pop < 10,000 \rightarrow CS_{min} = 19$
- $10,000 \leq pop < 50,000 \rightarrow CS_{min} = 27$
- $50,000 \leq pop < 100,000 \rightarrow CS_{min} = 35$
- $100,000 \leq pop \rightarrow CS_{min} = 43$

[4]The poll also decides which candidates become deputy councilors. This means that candidates who just miss out on a council seat become their party's first deputy councilor. This person will substitute for indisposed regular councilors from their own party at local council meetings (Fiva and Røhr, 2018).

3.4 *Data*

Our data set consists of all 187,000 candidates running for municipal office in 2003, 2007 and 2011. However, we exclude candidates running for party-independent local lists and minor lists that (almost) never win national office (27,000 observations), as well as candidates running for lists that fail to win any seat in the current election (4,000 observations). This is our baseline sample. In addition, we impose separate sample restrictions on the data sets that we use to estimate step (1) and (2) from Figure 3: (i) The councilor analyses excludes observations with missing data on personal votes (14,000 observations) and cases involving ties between two candidates (which are broken by the initial ranking on the list) (700 observations) (N=142,617), (ii) The mayoral analyses excludes all candidates running for office in municipalities using direct elections for mayor (12,000 observations), candidates that previously ran for national office (8,000 observations), and lists where the elected mayor is not in the top-ranked position (319 observations from 13 lists) (N=140,830).

Figure 4 provides some descriptive statistics on how the rank on a party's local list relates to candidate background features (top row) and local electoral outcomes (bottom row) using our baseline sample. In the top row, on the far left, we see that women get less than 30% of the top spots on parties' lists. The sawtoothed pattern suggests that some parties are alternating, listing a man in first spot, a woman in second spot, and so on. The next column in the top row shows that the first-ranked candidates on local lists are, on average, several years older, with age generally declining with list rank. A similar pattern holds for education and income, which is highest for the top ranked candidates and declines with rank.

The bottom row of Figure 4 shows that the fraction of candidates that (i) have a pre-advantage (ii) enter the executive board, and (iii) become deputy mayors, monotonically decrease with list rank. The bottom-right panel shows that each party's mayoral candidate is at the top of the list (in our sample). Thus, while not all first-listed candi-

dates win (only the one whose party or bloc wins the most votes), it is virtually the case that only first-listed candidates win. This feature is useful for identifying the returns to winning mayoral office.

Figure 4: Candidate background (top-panel) and local election outcomes (bottom panel)
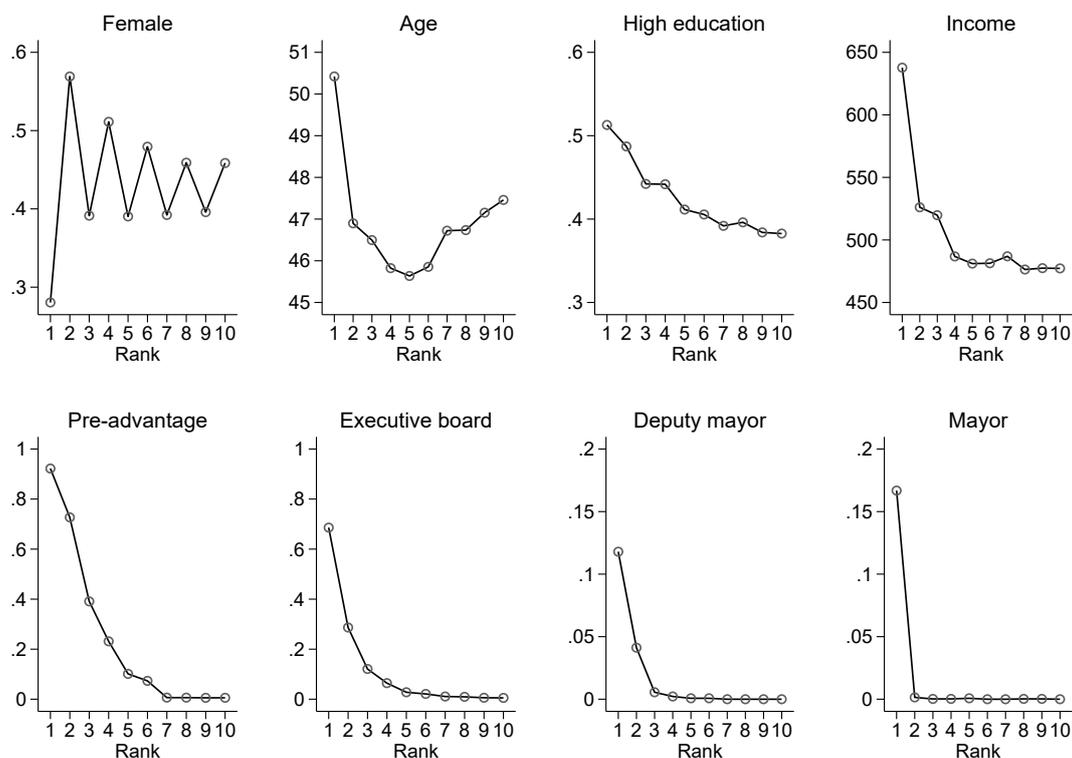
Note: The sample is limited to candidates in the top-ten positions for the main party lists running in the 2007-2011 period. We exclude candidates running for lists that fail to win any seat in the current election (N=40,549). We exclude the 2003 election, due to missing information about candidate background characteristics. Candidates' background characteristics are measured in the election year. Candidates with more than upper secondary education are classified as highly educated. Income is measured in constant (2015) NOK 1000 in the election year and is truncated at NOK 5,000,000.

4. Seniority Progression

4.1 *From Councilor to Mayor*

Following Fiva and Røhr (2018), we implement a within-list RD design, where we compare outcomes for candidates who are next in line to win a seat for party list l, to the last

candidate winning a seat for the same list. To construct the forcing variable, we sort candidates based on their $Poll_{il}$ (see Equation 2) to get their within-list rank, R_{il}. The *Win Margin* (standardized by party votes for list l) is then given by:

$$
WinMargin_{il} = \begin{cases} \frac{Poll_{il} - Poll_l^{S_l+1}}{PartyVotes_l} & \text{if } R_{il} \leqslant S_l \text{ [elected candidates]} \\ \\ \frac{Poll_{il} - Poll_l^{S_l}}{PartyVotes_l} & \text{if } R_{il} > S_l \text{ [non-elected candidates]} \end{cases} \tag{3}
$$

Fiva and Røhr (2018) document that a candidate that barely wins a seat in the local council has about a 9 percentage points (43%) higher probability of being elected in the next election compared to a candidate that just misses out on a seat on the same party list. They find that incumbents tend to advance in the party hierarchy and obtain safer ballot positions in future elections, which is what ultimately leads to electoral success. This is also in line with existing evidence from the Nordic countries that shows in party-centered and candidate-centered systems, incumbents are also more likely to be nominated and win future elections. Studies which focus on municipal elections in Denmark and Finland estimate an incumbency advantage of 3-13 percentage points (Dahlgaard, 2016; Kotakorpi et al., 2017).

In our analysis, we focus on re-nomination in the next election, and promotions to leadership positions in the next election term. Figure 5 provides the results. The left-hand panel shows that incumbents and non-incumbents run again in the subsequent election at about equal rates. However, incumbents are about 4 percentage points more likely to be awarded a "head start" than are non-incumbents (top-right panel). The bottom panels show that incumbents are about twice as likely to be promoted to leadership positions in the next election term than non-incumbents.

Having explored the incremental step from the municipal council to the mayoralty, we can briefly comment on some non-incremental steps. First, because there are so many more local councilors than seats in parliament, one neither expects nor finds a big

Figure 5: Councilor effects: Local political career
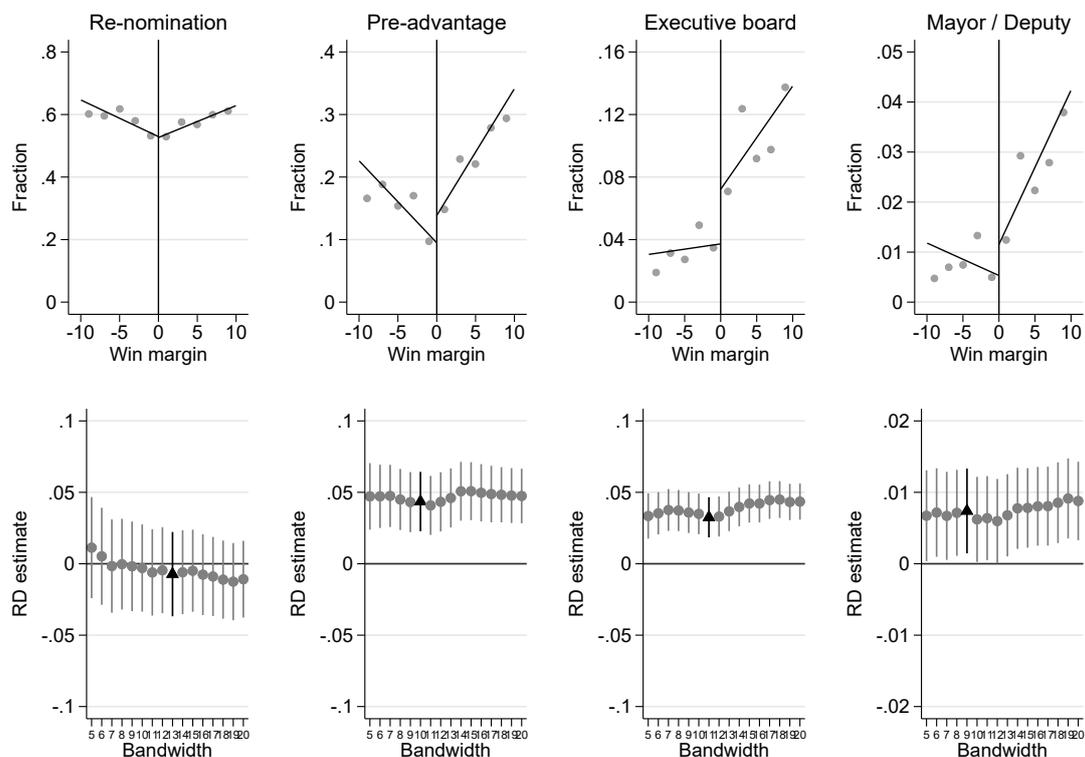
Note: The top panels display standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 10 percentage points. Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. The solid vertical line represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for 1 percentage point intervals. The baseline sample consists of all candidates running for municipal office for the main parties in the 2003-2011 period (N=160,546). We exclude candidates running for lists that do not win any seats (4,000 observations), candidates where we lack information about personal votes (11,000 observations), and cases with ties between two candidates (which are broken by the initial ranking on the list) (700 observations). The final sample is restricted to candidates which are next in line to win a seat or first in line to lose a seat, and the vote margin is less than 10 percentage points (N=8,136). The bottom panels display the RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. The black triangles correspond to the point estimate from the optimal bandwidth chosen by the Calonico et al. (2014) algorithm, as obtained by the rdrobust module in Stata.

effect of local winning on service in parliament (as we show in Appendix Figure A.2). Second, because councilors keep their full-time job while serving in office (and only get compensated for lost income by the local government), and because they are not key players in local politics, we do not expect local winning to generate much of a bump in their income. We confirm the lack of an income effect in the appendix too (Figure A.3).

4.2 From Mayor to Parliamentary List

In this section, we explore the direct link between intermediate and national levels by analyzing whether getting elected as mayor leads to future national success. We estimate the "mayoral effect," using the following specification:

$$Y_{rpmdt} = \gamma_{pdt} + \beta_r + \lambda_r Mayor_{pmdt} + u_{rpmdt} \tag{4}$$

Here Y_{rpmdt} represents a future electoral outcome for the candidate ranked r for party p in municipality m belonging to parliamentary district d at time t. We consider three outcome variables: (i) ever running for national office (Run), (ii) ever winning national office (Win), and (iii) accumulated days served in parliament (as of March 2019) ($Days$), which also includes time served as deputy MP. The model controls for party-district-year fixed effects (γ_{pdt}) and rank fixed effects (β_r). u_{rpmdt} is an error term.

The coefficients of primary interest are $\lambda_1, ..., \lambda_R$ where R is the maximum rank on a list. $Mayor_{pmdt}$ is a dummy variable capturing whether party p in municipality m of district d at time t wins the mayoralty. In our sample, all candidates that become mayor are listed in the first position ($r = 1$). The parameter λ_1 therefore isolates the effect of becoming mayor by comparing outcomes for mayors to outcomes for other first-ranked candidates running for the same party in the same parliamentary district in the same election year (in a different municipality).

It is not obvious that estimates based on Equation (4) will capture the causal effect of becoming the mayor on the outcomes of interest. Party lists that win the mayoralty might differ from party lists that do not win in many respects that might matter for

17

candidates' future political careers. Estimates of $\lambda_2, ..., \lambda_R$ will be informative in this regard. Any list-specific factor that benefits all candidates on a list will produce positive values for all the λ's. If λ_1 is larger than the other λ's, then this suggests that becoming mayor improves a politician's future outcomes.
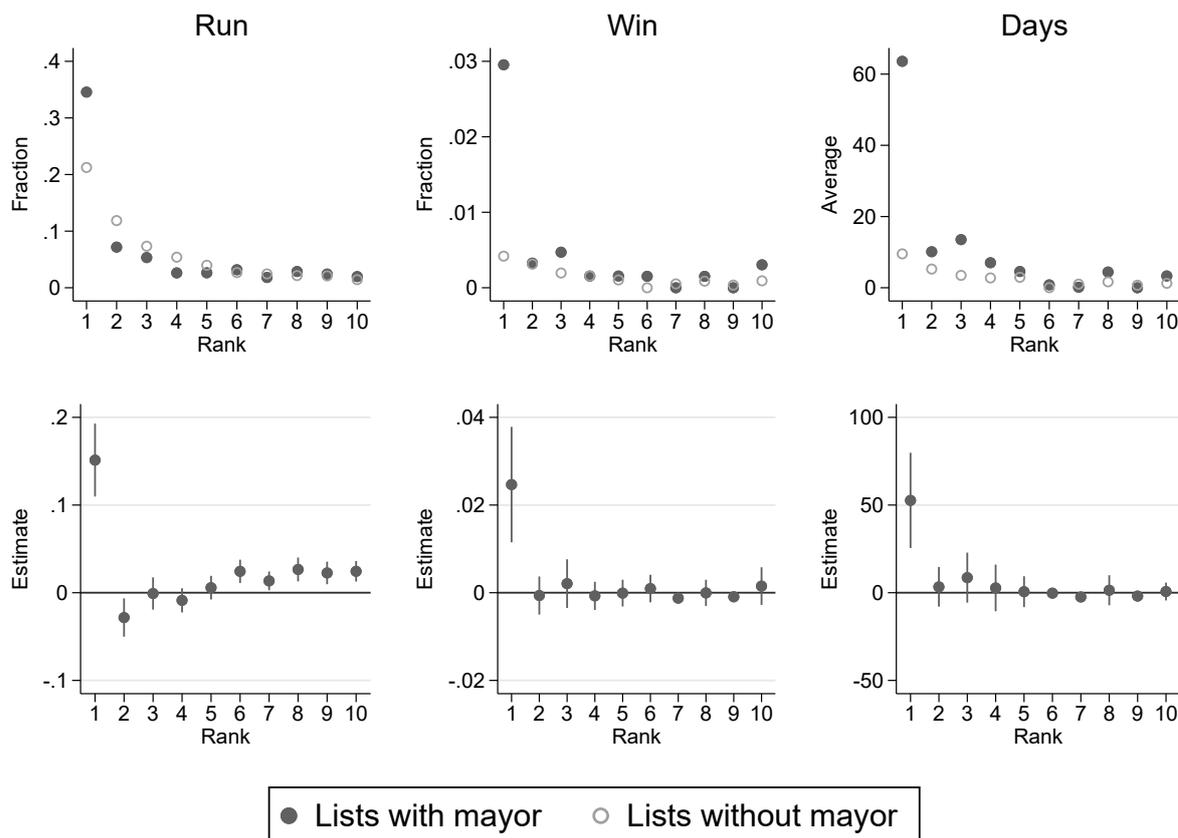
Figure 6 presents the results. The first row plots averages for lists with and without the mayor, by list rank of the candidate (we restrict attention to the first ten spots on each list; 62,000 observations). The left column ("Run") shows that first-ranked candidates who become mayor are about 15 percentage points more likely to run for parliament than first-ranked candidates who do not become mayor. In contrast, candidates ranked lower than first get no benefit from their party winning the mayoralty. So, the "mayoral boost" benefits only the mayor, not the other candidates on his/her list. The second column shows about a 2.5 percentage point boost in winning parliamentary office for mayors. Finally, the third column shows that mayors spend about 6 times more lifetime days in parliament than do first-ranked candidates on lists that do not win the mayoralty.

In interpreting these results, the reader should keep in mind that, in any given year, there are about $11,000$ local councillors chasing only 169 seats in parliament. These numbers naturally limit the size of any seniority progression effects. In the top ten listed candidates, the baseline probability of running for parliament is 0.056, the baseline probability of winning a parliamentary seat is 0.002, and the average number of days served in parliament is 4. The effects reported above look relatively large when judged against these baselines.

The second row of Figure 6 plots the λ_r coefficients, for $r = 1, ..., 10$, along with 95% confidence intervals. As can be seen, the only consistently significant effects are those comparing mayors to other first-ranked candidates.[5] In Appendix Table A.1, we also show results when adding further controls. We find that (i) younger candidates, as well

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[5]Second-ranked candidates belonging to the same list as the mayor seems to be *less* likely to run for future national office (while the opposite holds for lower-ranked candidates on the same lists). These spillover effects are likely to materialize when parties use seniority-based progression rules, and have a desire to geographically balance the ticket. Geographic balancing in list-based PR is a widely documented phenomena (see e.g. Gallagher and Marsh, 1988).

Figure 6: Getting elected as mayor leads to future national success

as (ii) those candidates that receives a larger share of the personal votes cast for his/her party, are more likely to continue to national politics. However, controlling for these factors, leaves the estimated "mayoral effects" basically unaltered.[6] In sum, this provides evidence that seniority based selection is at work.

5. Seniority versus Skills

We have shown that re-nominations in Norway's office hierarchy are consistent with the hypothesis that the main parties operate under seniority systems. The research designs used in Section 4 effectively ensure that time-invariant candidate characteristics are netted out. However, it remains possible that politicians develop their human capital, each time they serve a term in office, and that parties award nominations based on accrued human capital, rather than seniority per se. As in labor economics, retention or promotion based on accrued human capital is difficult to distinguish from retention or promotion based on seniority (Altonji and Shakotko, 1987; Topel, 1991).

How might one differentiate between skill-based and seniority-based nominations? One option is to investigate how competitive a party's nominations are. Since safe spots on a closed list virtually guarantee a seat in parliament, those working in the Schattschneiderian (1942) tradition would expect them to be contested. As Ranney (1981, p.103) puts it, "the most vital and hotly contested factional disputes in any party are the struggles that take place over the choice of its candidates..."

In sharp contrast to this expectation, there is almost no reported competition for Norwegian parliamentary nominations. The lack of reported competition is particularly striking in the case of "open" nominations. In US House districts that are safe for one party, the retirement of the incumbent leads to more competition in the dominant party's

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[6]Norwegian municipalities vary dramatically in population size, from small islands with a few hundred inhabitants to relatively large cities with some hundred thousand inhabitants. In Appendix Figure A.4 and A.5 we estimate "mayoral effects" separately for municipalities with below and above median population size (4,480 inhabitants). We do not find any clear evidence that seniority progression varies with municipality size.

primary election (Hirano and Snyder Jr, 2019). One would similarly expect that, if a Norwegian party were to lose one of its incumbents in a parliamentary district, several mayors from that party and district would have parliamentary ambitions and comparable accrued skills. So, in the absence of seniority norms, competition for "open" nominations should be fairly often observable. The lack of such competition constitutes clear evidence in favor of a seniority system operating in Norway.

A second way to distinguish skills and seniority is to conduct another RD analysis. Figure 7 provides RD plots for re-nomination overall (left-hand plot) and re-nomination in winnable spots (right-hand panel) for candidates running for one of the seven main parties in Norway during the 1953-2013 period.[7] We limit the RD analysis to candidates that are less than 5 percentage points away from the seat threshold in the current election, and that never previously won a seat in parliament or were close to doing so (i.e. within the five-percentage window).

The left-hand panel of Figure 7 shows that narrowly elected candidates are about 25 percentage points more likely to win re-nomination than narrowly losing candidates. Even more strikingly, the narrowly elected candidates are more than twice as likely to get re-nominated in a winnable spot, than narrowly losing candidates. For human capital accumulation to explain these results, narrowly elected new incumbents must establish large skill advantages over barely losing candidates during their first term in office.

Some readers might worry that serving one term in office affords a unique opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and personal contacts that will be relevant to earning re-nomination or promotion. This would be analogous to the literature showing that re-nomination of incumbents in the European Parliament depends on skill acquisition, seniority held constant (Wilson et al., 2016; Frech, 2016; Hermansen, 2018).

In order to address these concerns, we introduce a conceptual distinction that clarifies what our estimand is. The skills that are most likely to improve a politician's nomination and advancement are all party-specific (i.e., non-transferable to other parties). For exam-

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[7]For details about the construction of the forcing variable, as well as standard validity checks for the RD, we refer the reader to Fiva and Smith (2018).

ple, knowing the rules of party A's nomination process and cultivating relationships with those in party A who influence nominations are both directly relevant to re-nomination and promotion (when those processes are competitive). But knowing party A's rules and selectors does not help win nomination in another party, which will have different rules and selectors. Other examples of party-specific assets include contacts with donors, activists, and leaders who can offer "revolving door" opportunities at the end of one's career.

An important feature of all these party-specific assets is that, to the extent they are valuable, they help tie politicians to their parties and make de-selection more effective as a disciplinary tool. They are akin to bonds that can be collected only if the politician remains in his or her party. Thus, we think of the relevant estimand for our analysis as the sum of all the party-specific assets a member has that improve his or her future re-nomination and promotion prospects. (In our earlier model, s_{jt} now represents a combination of j's seniority ranking as of t and j's other party-specific assets, such as knowledge of party influentials, as of t.)

The remaining inferential threat can be stated as follows. Perhaps local councilors in their first terms acquire transferable assets (q_{jt}), such as knowledge of how the council operates or of how inter-governmental fiscal transfers are handled, and these transferable assets confer a sharply larger advantage in securing re-nomination or future leadership positions.

One response is as follows. If transferable assets such as those just described are highly valued by party nominators and uniquely accessible to incumbents, then incumbents should be able to sell their services to the highest bidder at each election. We should observe both party switching and overt competition for nomination slots. But we see neither in Norway. As noted above, visible competition for parliamentary nominations is rare. Moreover, party switching at both the local and national level is extremely rare. For example, only 13 of 1,108 Norwegian MPs (1%) ever switched among main parties during their parliamentary careers over the postwar era. Meanwhile, among the 9,517

local councilors (397 mayors) elected for one of the main parties in 2003, only 80 (1) run for a different party in the next local election (see Appendix Figure A.6).

Figure 7: National-level re-nomination, overall and in winnable spots
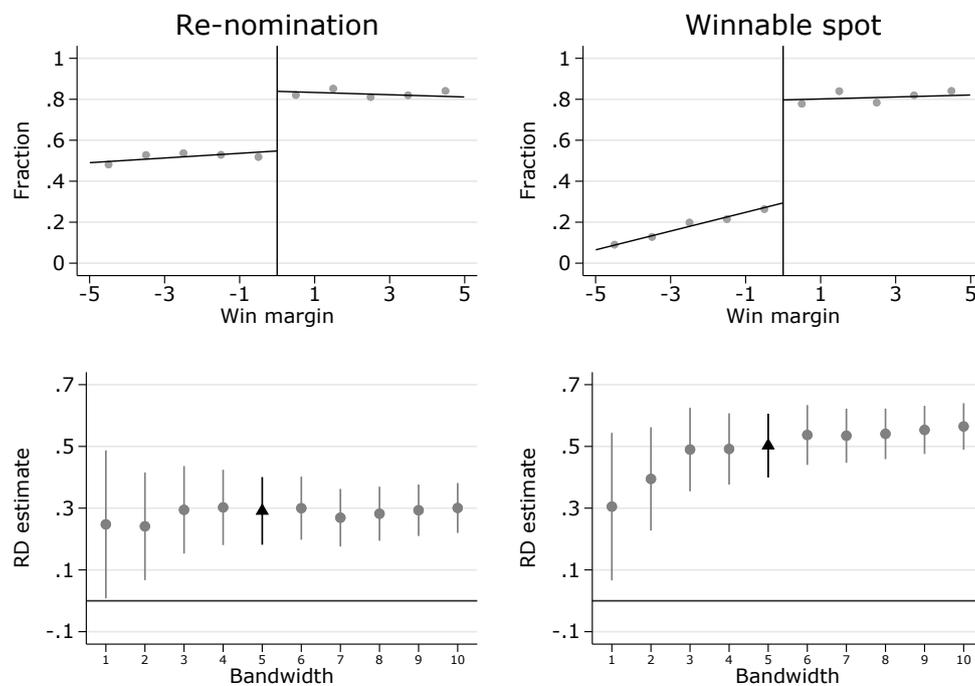
Note: The full sample covers national election candidates running for one of the seven main parties in the 1953-2013 period. We limit the RD analysis to candidates that are less than 5 percentage points away from the seat threshold in the current election, and that never previously won a seat in parliament or was close to doing so (i.e. within the five-percentage window) (N=1,000). Separate linear regression lines are estimated to the left and right of the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatterpoints. The bottom panels show how the RD estimate varies as a function of the bandwidth chosen. The black triangles correspond to the point estimate from the optimal bandwidth chosen by the Calonico et al. (2014) algorithm, as obtained by the rdrobust module in Stata.

Another response concerns substitute MPs. If non-specific assets drive politicians' ability to secure nominations and promotions, then substitutes who replace MPs late in a parliamentary term should have little time to learn on the job and thus little advantage over other losing candidates. In order to investigate whether this expectation holds, we identified all substitutes for MPs who died in the period 1953-2013 (the longest period on which we focus in this paper). From this initial sample, we subtracted substitutes

23

who had previously been elected to parliament, as well as those who entered parliament so late that the parliamentary lists had already been decided. This left us with a sample of 32 substitutes with no previous electoral success who entered prior to list finalization due to a plausibly exogenous event (the death of their predecessor).[8]

These substitutes entered parliament at widely varying times, from 21 days after the start of the session to 1,233 days after. For purposes of analysis, we split the sample at the median into 16 who entered "early" (within 716 days from the start of parliament) and 16 who entered "late" (717 or more days after). In Figure 8, we show these two groups of substitutes compared to all losing candidates, and to all winning candidates, in terms of their probability of being nominated at the next election, and their probability of securing a winnable spot at the next election. As can be seen, the early and late substitutes are indistinguishable from one another, and also from the winning candidates, in terms or nomination; all three groups had an 80 percent chance of securing nomination, significantly higher than the baseline group of 6,542 deputies that did not replace an MP that died in office. As regards winnable spots, the early and late substitutes are again indistinguishable from each other. While both groups have a discernibly lower probability of landing a winnable spot than do winning candidates, the difference is not very large substantively (about 15 percentage points). Moreover, both groups of substitutes are much closer to the winning than to the losing candidates.[9]

The late substitutes had relatively little time to acquire on-the-job skills before their parties made their nomination decisions. For example, four of them entered parliament within six months of the March 31st date at which lists have to be finalized. Since district parties start their nomination processes well before March 31st, these four had well less than half a year to acquire a skill advantage over their rivals for nomination. To explain our findings in terms of non-specific human capital, then, one would have to argue that

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[8]Other studies that rely on accidental death to improve causal inference include Hirano (2011) and Faccio and Parsley (2009).

[9]In both comparisons with the losing candidates, it is worth noting that a small fraction of the latter will spend some days in parliament due to the illness of the sitting MP, while another small fraction may sit for longer periods on parliament when the MP above them is promoted to cabinet (which is incompatible with retaining a seat in parliament in Norway).

substitutes learn very quickly.

All told, we think that the rarity of visible competition for nominations, the rarity of party switching, and the fact that substitutes who enter parliament late in the term have much better nomination outcomes than other losing candidates are all inconsistent with the hypothesis that the acquisition of non-specific human capital drives nomination decisions. In contrast, all three patterns are consistent with the operation of a seniority system in Norway.

Figure 8: National-level re-nomination, overall and in winnable spots, by four categories
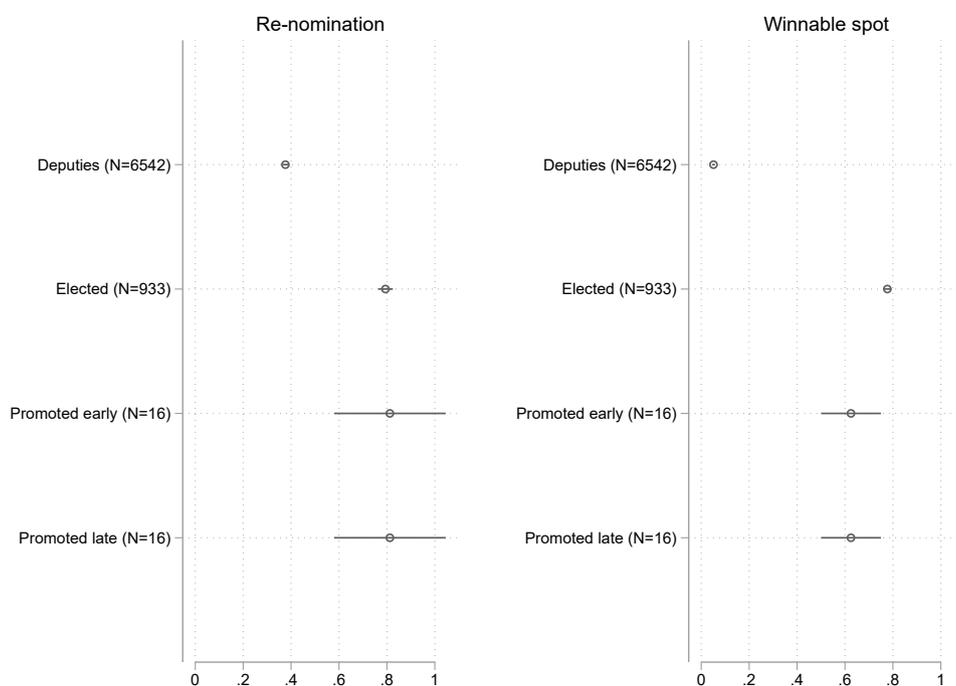
Note: This figure displays the fraction re-nominated (left-hand panel) and the fraction re-nominated in a winnable spot (right-hand panel), and corresponding 95% confidence intervals, by four categories: Deputies that did not replace an MP that died in office (N=6542), elected candidates (N=933), deputies that replace MPs that die early in their election period (below the median; N=16) and deputies that replace MPs that die late in their election period (above the median; N=16). We exclude five deputies promoted less than six months before the next election because they are promoted after the lists for the next election must be ready. The sample is limited to candidates that never previously won a seat in parliament.

6. Higher Offices

At the outset of our paper, we illustrated an office and nomination hierarchy using only three levels. However, the offices and nominations that a party allocates to its members may extend into the parliamentary and post-political stages of a politician's career. In this section, we consider the extent to which cabinet posts, top-level bureaucratic posts, and, more indirectly, post-political opportunities are allocated via seniority.

Parties that regularly win power at the national level are in a position to allocate cabinet portfolios and other high offices. Do Norway's seven main parties incorporate such offices into their seniority systems? To investigate this question, we look at promotion to a cabinet position (the highest post behind prime minister), and promotion to county administrator (*fylkesmann*), a top-level bureaucratic post.[10]

Figure 9 provides RD plots corresponding to those provided in Figure 7. The dependent variables are dummies that take a value of one if the individual was *ever* promoted to a cabinet position or a top-level bureaucratic post, respectively, in their career. In line with our expectations regarding seniority, we find that narrowly winning a seat in parliament roughly doubles candidates' chances of obtaining a cabinet position in the future. The RD estimate for county administrator is negative, but not statistically significant. Our findings may be related to the differences in prestige for the two types of offices. While cabinet promotions should be considered an apex of a political career, county administrators are often used as a "retirement post". Becoming a county administrator is also a much rarer event. In our sample period, there are only 19 positions in the country and appointees often remain in office for decades.

In order for control over nominations to induce effort and loyalty from its members, a party must control safe nominations that lead to valuable offices. One way that political office could be valuable to a politician is through private, financial returns (Ferraz and Finan, 2011; Fisman et al., 2015). As a result of public service, politicians gain increased

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[10]A county administrator is the national government's representative in each county, and responsible for municipal appeals, state regulation of agriculture, and has financial oversight of the municipality.

Figure 9: Seat in parliament and future careers
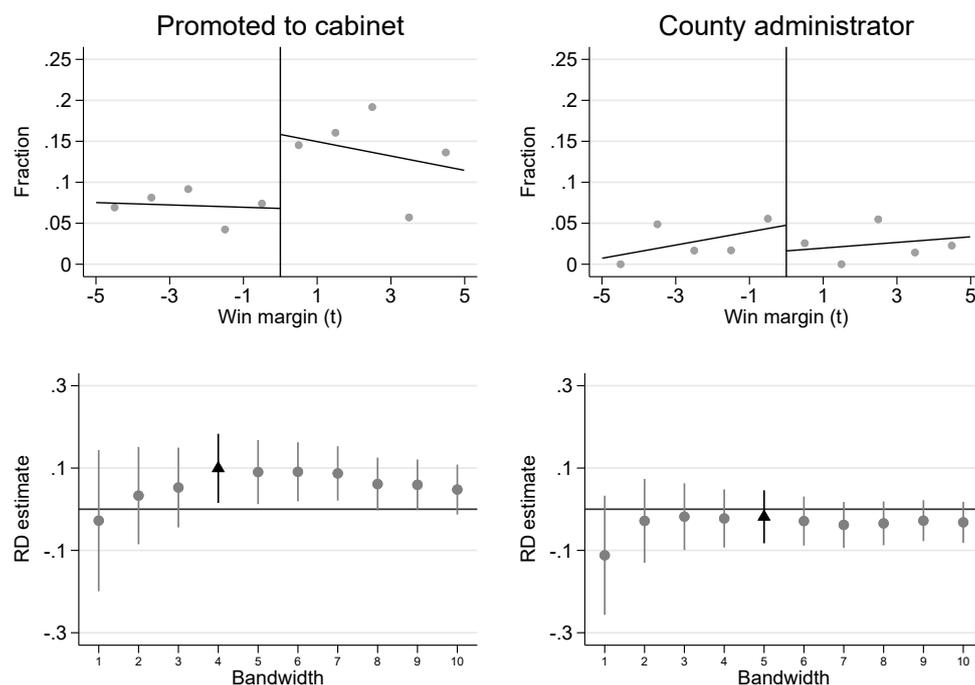
Note: The full sample covers national election candidates running for one of the seven main parties in the 1953-2013 period. We limit the RD analysis to candidates that are less than 5 percentage points away from the seat threshold in the current election, that never previously won a seat in parliament or was close to doing so (i.e. within the five-percentage window), and that have no previous experience from cabinet (N=986). Separate linear regression lines are estimated to the left and right of the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatterpoints. The black triangles correspond to the point estimate from the optimal bandwidth chosen by the Calonico et al. (2014) algorithm, as obtained by the rdrobust module in Stata.

prestige and political connections that help them obtain lucrative outside employment or direct links with business or firms (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; Geys and Mause, 2013; Bertrand et al., 2014). Prior research has focused primarily on the returns to serving at the national level, and has found positive effects on personal income during and after office.[11] In the case of Norway, Willumsen (2011) finds that election to parliament results in an average increase in annual income of 10-15% for a candidate, after the parliamentary career has ended.

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[11]For example, see Peichl et al. (2013), Fahey (2018), Eggers and Hainmueller (2009), Querubin and Snyder (2013), or Diermeier et al. (2005).

At the local level, however, the financial value of political office is less clear. In Norway and in many other countries, being a local politician is a part-time position held concurrently with other sources of income (Djankov et al., 2010). As mentioned in section 3.2, we find no evidence that winning a seat in the local council affect future individual incomes (Appendix Figure A.3). This null finding is in line with previous studies from the other Nordic countries (Kotakorpi et al., 2017; Berg, 2018).

What about the economic returns to winning an intermediate post? Figure 10 display the results from a difference-in-differences research design for mayoral candidates partic-ipating in the 2011 local election.[12] We use income data covering the 2003-2017 period. The long time period is useful for two reason. First, it allows us to assess the plausibility of the parallel trend assumption underlying the difference-in-differences design. Second, we can investigate the dynamics of the treatment effect.

The top-panel of Figure 10 shows that candidates who are ultimately appointed to mayor in 2011 earn more than candidates that are not appointed mayor in the 2003-2010 period. However, the pre-election trends are similar in the two groups.

In 2011, when mayors enter office towards the end of the year, income jumps up. In the years with "full treatment" (2012-2014) mayors get an income boost of about NOK 200,000 (USD 25,000) per year. Unless they are re-elected, mayors leave office towards the end of 2015. We observe that income falls in 2016 and 2017, suggesting that the income boost from becoming a mayor is not permanent.[13]

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[12]A mayoral candidate is here defined as a first-ranked candidate running for one of the seven main parties. We exclude incumbent mayors.

[13]In Appendix Figure A.7, we show how incomes change over time for those who become mayor for just one term (2011-2015), those who serve as mayor for two terms (2011-2019), and mayoral candidates who are not appointed to mayor in 2011. In Appendix Figure A.8 we re-do our difference-in-differences analysis focusing on candidates ranked second rather than first. There are no statistically significant effects in this placebo analysis.

Figure 10: Returns to Office for Mayors
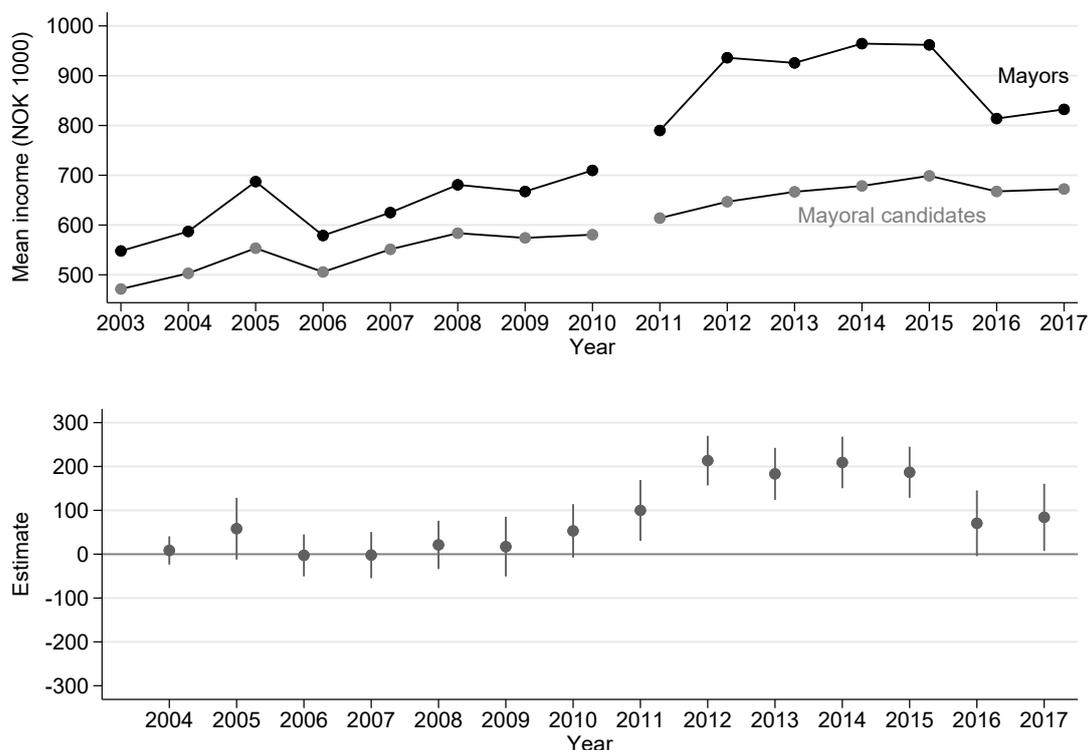
Note: The sample is limited to first-ranked candidates running for one of the seven main parties in the 2011 election (1841 candidates; N=27,501). We exclude party lists with an incumbent mayor. Income is measured in constant (2015) NOK 1000, and is truncated at NOK 5,000,000. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level (418 clusters).

7. Are Seniority Systems Stable?

A natural question about seniority systems concerns their stability. Will central party leaders honor seniority, even in cases where doing so requires promoting less skilled candidates (Hollyer et al., 2018)? Will party members who participate in the nomination process at the local level honor seniority?

As regards the latter question, McKelvey and Riezman (1992) suggests a positive answer. If local nominators believe that their party operates according to a seniority system, then they will value having local candidates with higher seniority. As between two otherwise identical local candidates, the one with more seniority will be expected to

progress into the cabinet (or other high offices) faster than the one with less seniority. Thus, seniority per se becomes a reason for local nominators to prefer a candidate over his/her intra-party rivals.

What about central party leaders? In the short run, they might prefer a nomination procedure in which they could nominate whomever they wished. However, such a system would deprive them of the ability to make credible long-term commitments to their followers, thereby weakening the party. Thus, if leaders have long enough time horizons, they should honor any commitments they make to decide nominations on the basis of seniority.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, we have hypothesized that parties in closed-list electoral systems have significant incentives to build seniority systems to allocate nominations and offices among their members; and have begun to provide a suite of tools that could be used to identify when such systems are in place. Given that a large proportion of advanced democracies operate under closed-list proportional representation, if we are correct that many parties in such systems use seniority in allocating their valuable list spots, then the absence of any mention of such systems in standard surveys (e.g. Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Norris, 1997) would suggest a significant gap in the existing literature.

Our approach to identifying the existence of seniority systems intersects with an extensive literature that examines incremental moves in political careers—does a politician get re-nominated (static ambition), does s/he get promoted (progressive ambition)? Here, we raise an important question: why does incumbency predict re-nomination and promotion? This question has been addressed in candidate-centered systems, particularly in the incumbency advantage literature focusing on SMD cases like the US or India. But as we discuss, prior findings from candidate-centered environments are very different than those in closed-list electoral systems.

What benefits might political leaders accrue by building seniority systems? Although it is beyond the scope of the current essay to fully discuss them, we can mention some prominent possible benefits—which help to motivate our study.

First, seniority procedures avoid internecine fights for nominations. Safe spots on closed lists are very valuable and, were they awarded via some open competition, internal party factions would strive to win them. Seniority systems are one way to lessen such competition, which may be unproductive for the party as a whole.

Second, promises of future safe nominations (and hence office payoffs) can induce candidates given safe list spots to exert current campaign effort. This is an important effect since such candidates otherwise have negligible incentives to campaign hard. Cox et al. (2020) elaborate on this point focusing especially on seniority-based promotions into cabinet positions, and a similar logic applies to the connection between seniority-based allocation to prominent committees.

Third, seniority systems can stabilize parties' memberships. Those who contemplate leaving would have to sacrifice their seniority (or negotiate to have it honored by their new part). Consistent with this observation, we have shown that Norwegian politicians very rarely switch parties.

Fourth, promises of future safe nominations (and hence office payoffs) can induce incumbents to vote with their party. Many scholars have noted that threats of deselection can induce voting cohesion (e.g. Kam, 2009). Such threats should be particularly potent in systems in which nomination is tantamount to election; and party leaders exert centralized control over nominations (Cox et al., 2019). On the other hand, any factor that reduces the central party leadership's control over nominations should reduce the price in effort and loyalty that it can demand. For example, dual mandates make a party "less liquid," in the sense that the expected flow of valuable nominations it has to allocate shrinks, which in turn reduces politicians' incentives to invest in party institutions (Cirone, 2019).

Fifth, to the extent that seniority is weighed more heavily when the party makes nominations to higher offices, entry is increasingly restricted. In a purely meritocratic

31

system, senior politicians would have no intrinsic advantage over either their juniors or "populists" (who build a career in the private sector and then seek a party's nomination). In a seniority system, in contrast, both juniors and populists face a barrier to entry that grows with the importance of the office they might seek. As do all barriers to entry, the barrier to competition for a party's nominations should increase the rents that senior politicians can extract from their offices, especially when nomination is equivalent to election. That said, rent extraction will obviously depend on how "good standing" is defined in each party—who defines the party's legislative position to which loyalty is demanded, who judges whether the electoral effort exerted by nominees is adequate.

Given the variety of benefits that building seniority systems might afford to party leaders, it would seem plausible that many would have considered them. We have provided initial evidence that Norwegian parties appear to operate via seniority procedures. If seniority systems are to be put on the scholarly agenda, it will be important to further bolster our ability to detect them and to explore their systemic effects.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Mayoral effects

|	(1) Run	(2) Run	(3) Win	(4) Win	(5) Days	(6) Days
Rank 1 X Mayor	0.151***	0.132***	0.025***	0.025***	52.643***	54.323***
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(13.814)	(14.589)
Rank 2 X Mayor	-0.028**	0.002	-0.001	0.001	3.352	7.212
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(5.748)	(6.138)
Rank 3 X Mayor	-0.001	0.020**	0.002	0.003	8.596	11.278
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(7.243)	(7.786)
Rank 4 X Mayor	-0.009	-0.001	-0.001	-0.000	2.722	4.109
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(6.750)	(7.252)
Rank 5 X Mayor	0.006	0.008	-0.000	0.000	0.584	1.360
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(4.474)	(4.855)
Rank 6 X Mayor	0.024***	0.030***	0.001	0.001	-0.248	0.182
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(1.294)	(1.406)
Rank 7 X Mayor	0.013**	0.014***	-0.001**	-0.001**	-2.430**	-2.496*
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(1.194)	(1.297)
Rank 8 X Mayor	0.027***	0.025***	-0.000	-0.000	1.398	1.031
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(4.357)	(4.711)
Rank 9 X Mayor	0.023***	0.021***	-0.001**	-0.001**	-1.925**	-2.165**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.929)	(1.035)
Rank 10 X Mayor	0.024***	0.023***	0.002	0.001	0.689	0.502
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(2.584)	(2.775)
Personal votes (share of party total)		0.458***		0.024***		52.548***
		(0.020)		(0.005)		(10.698)
Gender (Female=1)		0.018***		0.001**		2.027**
		(0.002)		(0.000)		(0.887)
Age in election year		-0.002***		-0.000***		-0.193***
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.037)
Mean of outcome var.	0.057	0.058	0.002	0.002	3.521	3.715
R-squared	0.07	0.10	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Observations	61689	57042	61689	57042	61689	57042

Note: This table provides estimates of $\lambda_1, ..., \lambda_{10}$ based on equation (4). The sample is restricted to candidates ranked in position $1-10$ for one of the seven main parties in the 2003-2011 period. Standard errors are clustered at the party-parliamentary district-year level (**398** clusters). * $p < 0.10$,** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A.1: Political careers before entering Parliament for the first time
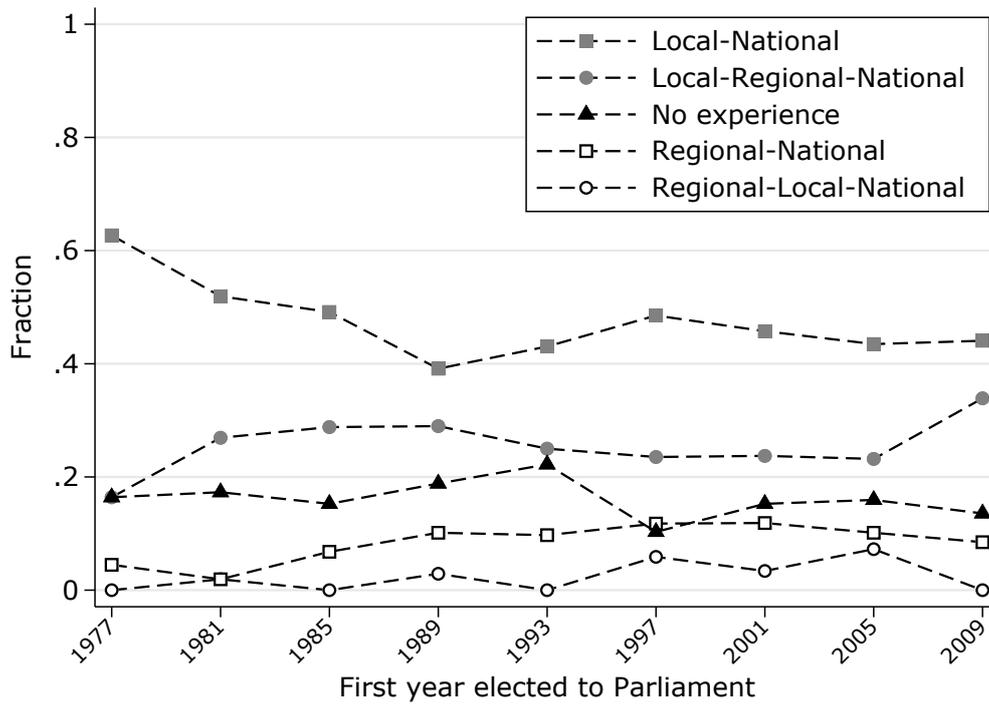

Note: Sample is restricted to candidates winning a seat in parliament for the first time in the 1977-2009 period (N=574). Direct elections for the regional office are first held in 1975. A small fraction of candidates that started their career simultaneously at the local and regional level are classified as "local-regional-national".

Figure A.2: Councilor effects: National political career
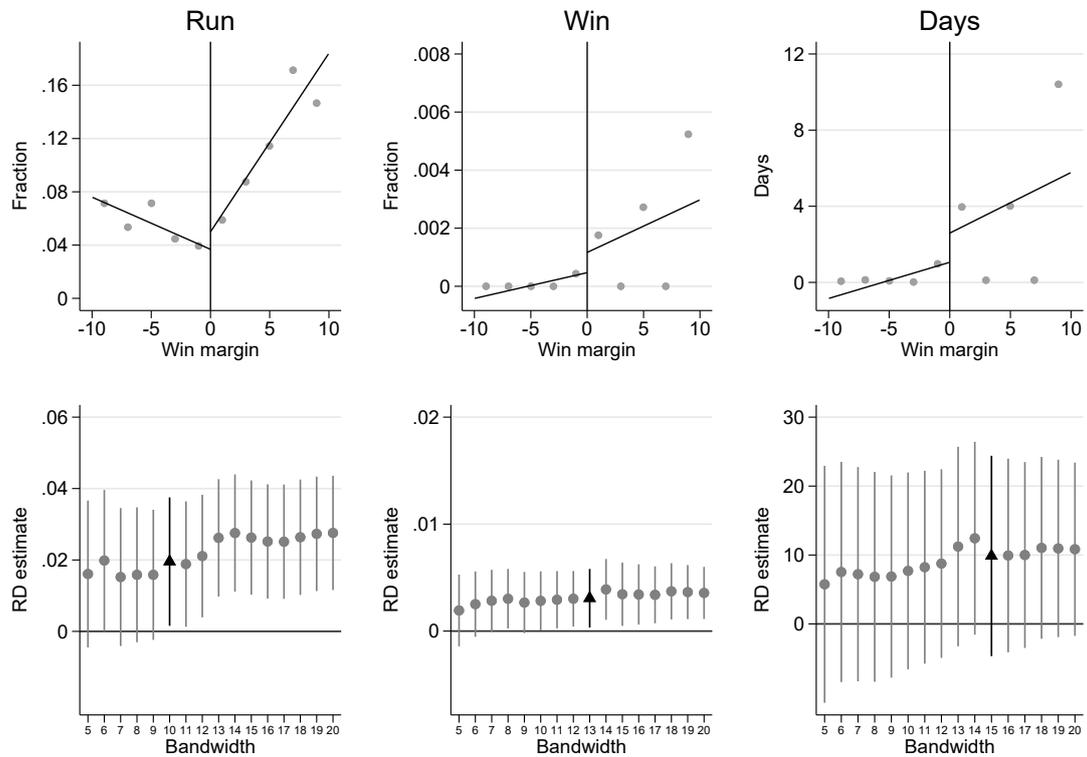
Note: The top panels display standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 10 percentage points. Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. The solid vertical line represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for 1 percentage point intervals. In addition to the sample restrictions mentioned in Figure 5, we also exclude candidates that previously ran for national office (919 observations). The bottom panels display the RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. The black triangles correspond to the point estimate from the optimal bandwidth chosen by the Calonico et al. (2014) algorithm, as obtained by the rdrobust module in Stata.

Figure A.3: Councilor effects: Economic returns to office
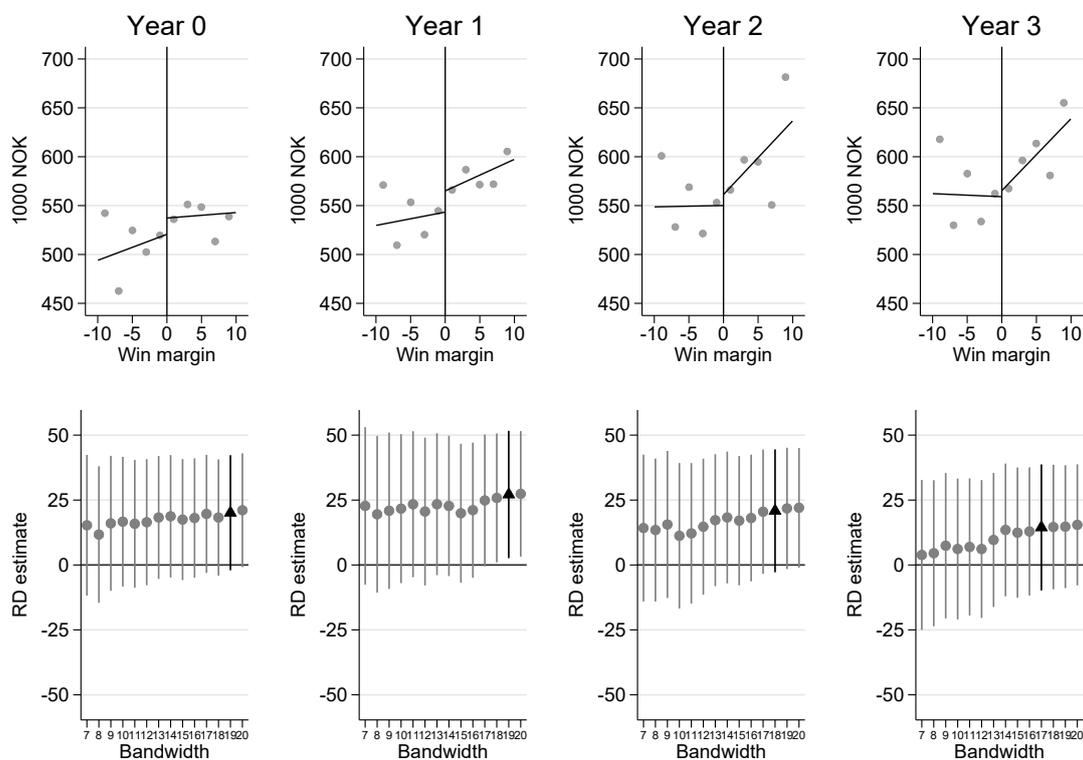
Note: The top panels display standard RD plots using a bandwidth of 10 percentage points. Separate linear lines are estimated below and above the discontinuity using the underlying data, not the binned scatter points. Income is measured in constant (2015) NOK 1000, and is truncated at NOK 5,000,000. The solid vertical line represents a zero win margin, indicating the transition from barely missing out on a seat to barely winning. Each dot represents a binned average for 1 percentage point intervals. The baseline sample consists of all candidates running for municipal office for the main parties in the 2007-2011 period (N=104,393). We exclude candidates running for lists that do not win any seats (2,647 observations), candidates where we lack information about personal votes (8,873 observations), and cases with ties between two candidates (which are broken by the initial ranking on the list) (444 observations). The final sample is restricted to candidates which are next in line to win a seat or first in line to lose a seat (N=7,734). The bottom panels display the RD estimates and 95% confidence intervals as a function of the bandwidth chosen. The black triangles correspond to the point estimate from the optimal bandwidth chosen by the Calonico et al. (2014) algorithm, as obtained by the rdrobust module in Stata.

Figure A.4: Getting elected as mayor leads to future national success in small municipalities
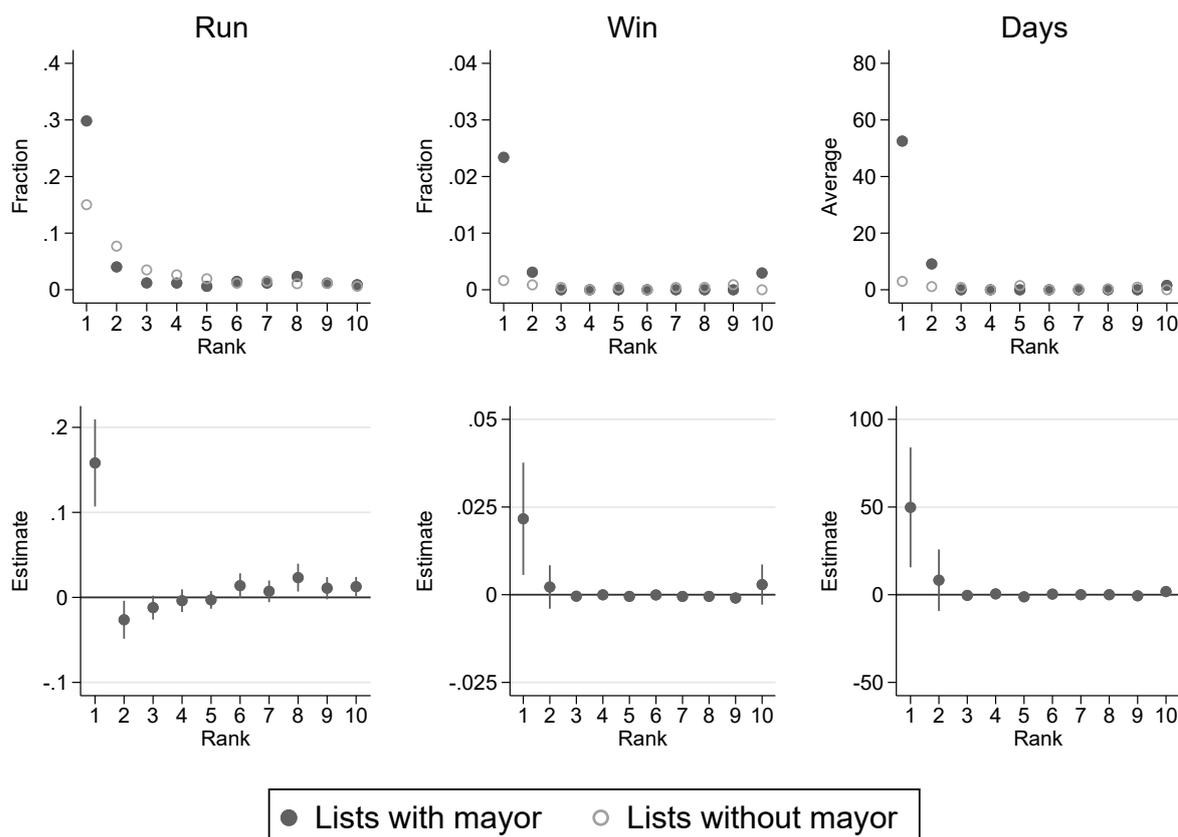
Note: *The top-row displays averages of Run, Win, and Days for lists with and without the mayor, by list rank of the candidate. The second row provides estimates of $\lambda_1, ..., \lambda_{10}$ based on equation (4). The sample is restricted to candidates ranked in position $1-10$ for one of the seven main parties in municipalities with below median population size in the 2003-2011 period (N=26,231). We exclude candidates that previously ran for national office, municipalities with directly elected mayors, and lists where the elected mayor is not the in the top-ranked position. Standard errors are clustered at the party-parliamentary district-year level (**367** clusters).*

Figure A.5: Getting elected as mayor leads to future national success in large municipalities
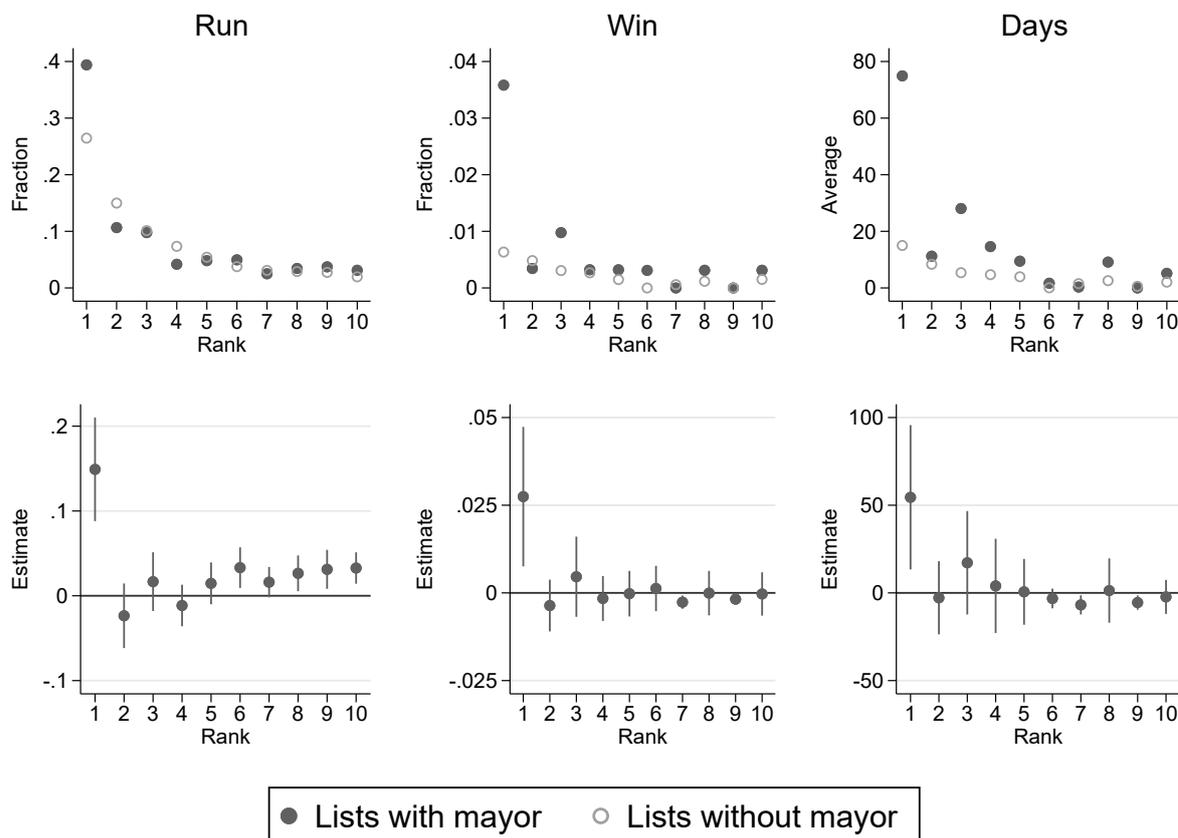
Note: *The top-row displays averages of Run, Win, and Days for lists with and without the mayor, by list rank of the candidate. The second row provides estimates of $\lambda_1, ..., \lambda_{10}$ based on equation (4). The sample is restricted to candidates ranked in position $1-10$ for one of the seven main parties in municipalities with above median population size in the 2003-2011 period (N=35,548). We exclude candidates that previously ran for national office, municipalities with directly elected mayors, and lists where the elected mayor is not the in the top-ranked position. Standard errors are clustered at the party-parliamentary district-year level (**398** clusters).*

Figure A.6: Future party switching for councilors and mayors elected in 2003
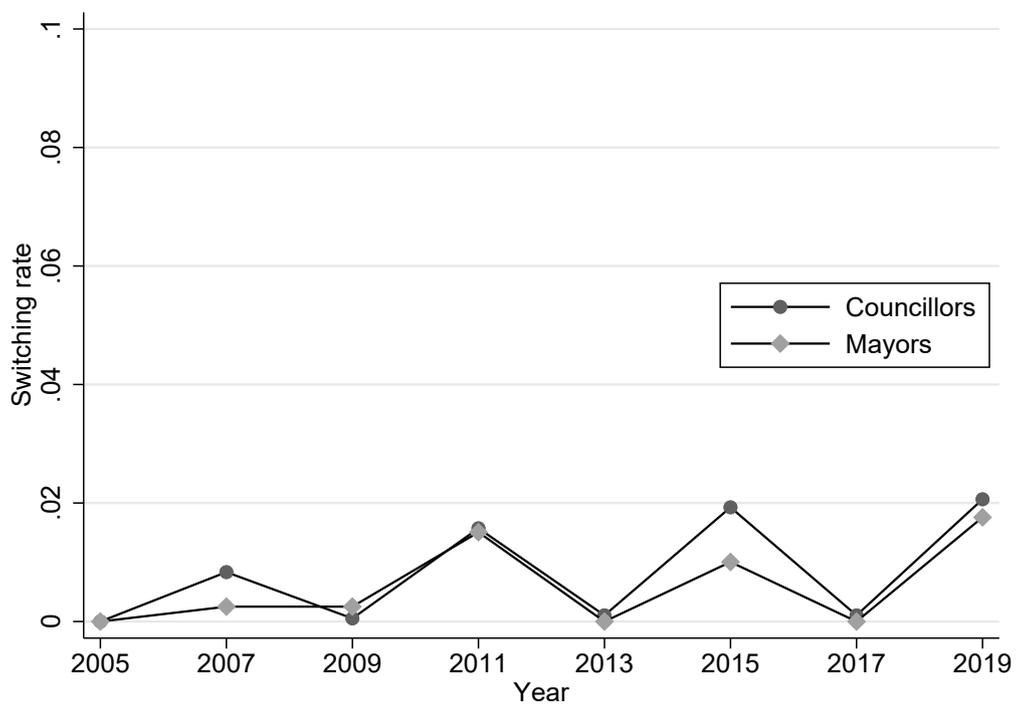
*Note: This figure displays the fraction of councilors (N=9597) and mayors (N=397) elected in 2003 that run for a different main party in the 2005-2019 period. Local elections are held in 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. National elections are held in 2005, 2009, 2013, and 2017.*

Figure A.7: Split-sample analysis of mayors' returns to office

Mayors serving 2011-2015

Mayors serving 2011-2019
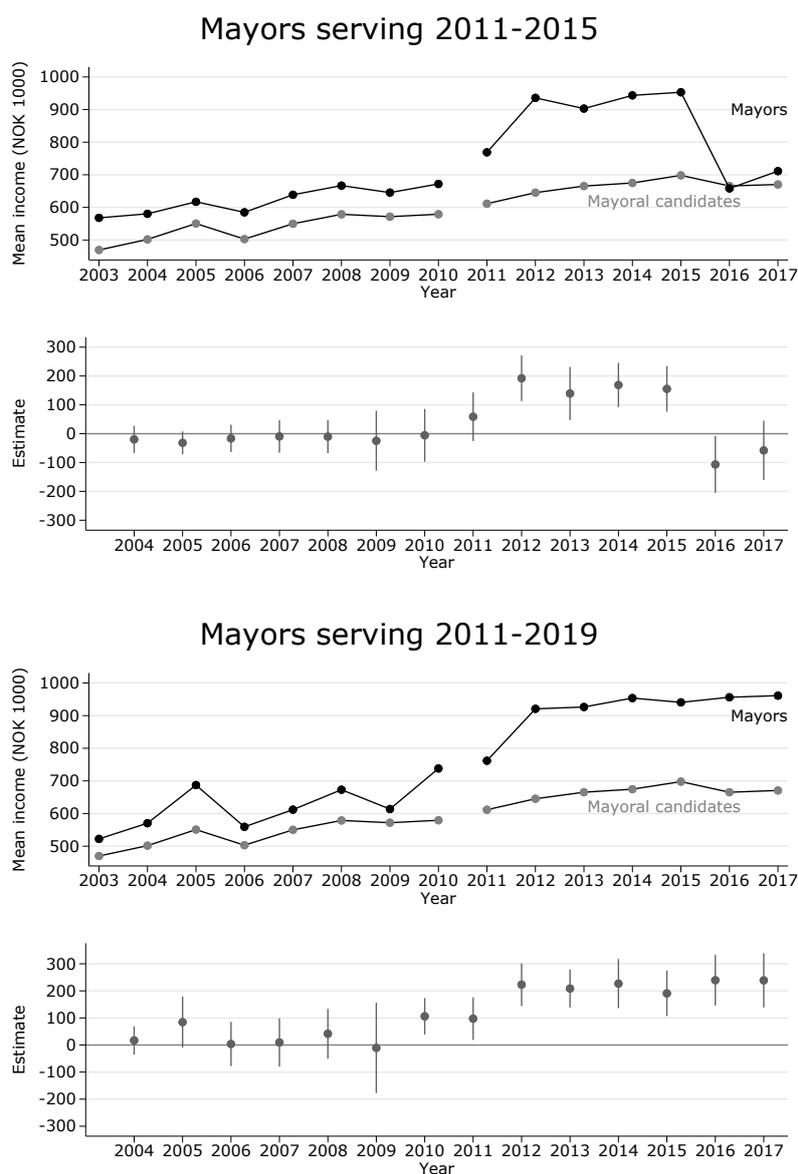
Note: This figure show how incomes change over time for those who become mayor for just one term (2011-2015), those who become mayor for two terms (2011-2019), and mayoral candidates who are not appointed to mayor in 2011. In total there are 204 new mayors appointed for main party lists in 2011. 108 of these are not reappointed in 2015. Their average income is given by the black line in the top panel. The average income for the 96 re-appointed mayors is given by the black line in the bottom panel. Otherwise the samples are constructed as in Figure 10. As can be seen, the average income of one-term mayors becomes indistinguishable from that of unsuccessful mayoral candidates after they leave office. Meanwhile, two-term mayors maintain their income gain in both terms. These differences most likely reflect the salaries that mayors earn, which averaged about NOK 950,000 in 2017.

Figure A.8: Placebo analysis on second ranked candidates

2nd ranked on mayors list

2nd ranked on other list
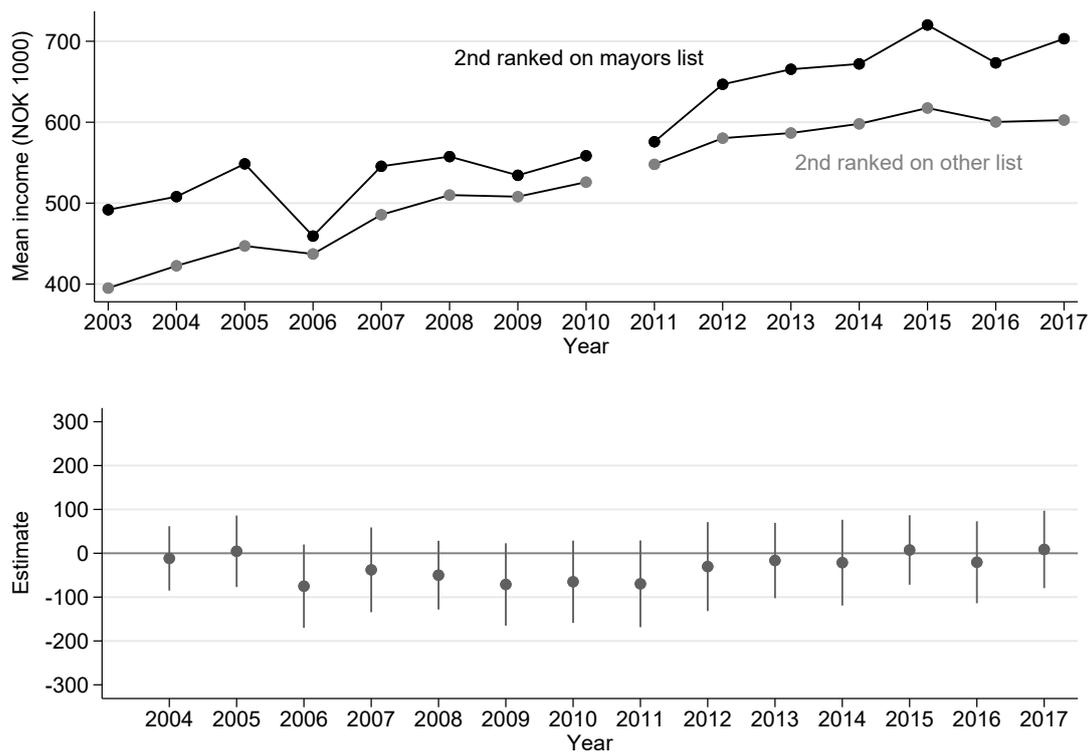
Note: The sample is limited to second-ranked candidates running for one of the seven main parties in the 2011 election (1787 candidates; N=26,606). We exclude party lists with an incumbent mayor. Income is measured in constant (2015) NOK 1000, and is truncated at NOK 5,000,000. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level (421 clusters).