First among equals: The first place effect and political promotion in multi-member plurality elections

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ABSTRACT

We study the impact of rank-based decision-making in a multi-member plurality electoral system by examining the decisions of Philippine legislative councilors to run for and win higher office. By focusing on multi-member plurality elections, we identify the effect of rank amongst politicians that hold the same office and received a similar number of votes. To identify the causal effect of rank, we conduct a close-elections RD at the village, municipality, and province levels. Our main result is the *first place effect*: incumbent first placers are 5–9% (1–4%) more likely to run (win) in future elections than incumbent second placers. The first place effect is unique among rank effects: subsequent rank comparisons yield substantially weaker or insignificant results. Further evidence suggests that a variety of potential mechanisms—party alignment, strategic voting, differential levels of media exposure or the better performance of first placers—do not seem to explain our results. These results improve our understanding of the variety of ways rank effects interact with electoral systems.

1. Introduction

Recent scholarship in both economics and political science has established the prevalence of rank-based decision-making on a variety of political outcomes, including reelection, the propensity to contest elections, political appointments and government formation (Anagol and Fujiwara, 2016; Fujiwara and Sanz, 2020). Perhaps the most established empirical relationship in this field is the effect of electoral rank—based on a candidate's relative number of votes in a given election—on political promotion, for example how rank determines who is promoted within a political party or who runs for higher office in future elections. The relationship between rank and political promotion has been documented in diverse contexts: Swedish and Brazilian councilors (Folke et al., 2016), Norwegian councilors and mayors (Cirone et al., 2021), Finnish councilors (Merillainen and Tukiainen, 2018), and Slovakian MPs (Crisp et al., 2013). In spite of their relative geographical diversity, these studies focus on the dynamics of rank in proportional representation elec-

toral systems. We therefore know little about how rank interacts with political promotion in alternative electoral schemes.

This paper examines the effect of rank on political promotion in multi-member plurality electoral systems. How rank affects political promotion in such a system remains an open question, and there are reasons to believe that differences may exist. Most obvious are the institutional differences between proportional representation and different types of plurality electoral systems. Research has pointed to the many differences in both voter and politician behavior between these two broad systems, such as when voters engage in strategic or tactical voting, the level of politician's effort, whether candidates seek minority votes, and when candidates cultivate the personal vote (Blais et al., 2001; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Cox and Shugart, 1996; Myerson, 1993). Differences over both the existence of rank effects and the mechanisms by which it operates naturally come into question as well. Furthermore, the extant research has identified political parties as the primary decision-makers that take rank information and decide on matters of political promotion. Yet political parties are notoriously weak in several countries that hold plurality elections (Hicken, 2009). Moreover, by virtue of its construction, plurality systems incentivize candidates to seek the personal vote. The underlying factors that lead to the personal vote—candidate

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qualities, qualifications, and record—may thus be mechanisms that mediate the effect of rank on political promotion. Finally, the link between rank and political promotion is further complicated in multi-member plurality systems—which ranks matter more than others?.

We thus need a setting that employs a multi-member plurality electoral system and can clarify the underlying conceptual differences outlined above. Legislative elections in the Philippines provide this ideal context. Legislators are elected through multi-member plurality, where rank varies among legislators (depending on who gets more votes), while their institutional responsibilities remain similar. Furthermore, the weakness of party alignment in the Philippines opens up opportunities to explore alternative mechanisms. We use three tiers of legislatures—village, municipality, and provincial councils. We examine whether the rank of incumbent councilors—placing first, second, and so on in a given election—increases their probability of running for and winning higher office in a future election. Examining three different tiers of government shows not only the validity of our results, but also that they are robust throughout a country's political system. Establishing the rank effect can be challenging, as comparing first and second placers suffers from selection issues: higher ranked candidates may have more resources, better innate ability or larger networks. To address these endogeneity concerns, we employ a regression discontinuity design on close elections between first and second placers. Because of the political structure of local councils, first and second placers are both elected to the same office—providing us with the ideal setting to isolate the impact of rank on future political outcomes.

Our results provide evidence for a novel empirical association between rank and political promotion in multi-member plurality systems. We call this the first place effect: the effect of ranking first (versus second) on the probability of running for and winning higher office (our measure of political promotion). First place councilors in a close election are 5–9% (1–4%) more likely to run for (win) higher political office in the subsequent election—a result that holds in all levels of local government. First place village councilors are more likely to run for village chair, first place municipal councilors are more likely to run for vice mayor, and first place provincial councilors are more likely to run for vice governor. These findings suggest that rank has a significant impact on future electoral success, increasing the probability of first placers running for and winning higher office by at least 30% more than that of the second placer. The first place effect is robust to different specifications and bandwidth values, and satisfies covariate balance. Furthermore, we show that the first place effect is unique, the empirical link between rank and promotions becomes significantly weaker once we compare second place to third place candidates (around 1–2%), and becomes more insignificant for subsequent comparisons. Third, we provide suggestive evidence that party organization (and hence party-based decision-making) does not serve as the mechanism that links rank and political promotion. We provide a test for party alignment between the councilor and the politician occupying higher office or between the first and second place councilors, and find that rank effects are not stronger for councilors from the same party. In addition, we explore whether first placers receive more campaign funds from their party than second placers, and find no significant differences. These results suggest that candidates' decisions to run are not subservient to party decisions, a result that differs from previous papers. Finally, we provide evidence suggesting that alternative mechanisms—such as voter coordination and media exposure—do not mediate our results.

Our results add to the existing literature on the link between rank and political promotion in particular, and the effect of rank on political selection in general. The primary analytical leverage offered by our focus on multi-member plurality system is twofold. First, we examine rank effects outside the context of proportional representation. This allows us to examine rank dynamics beyond the electoral system that is most often studied. Second, multi-member plurality elections allow us to examine rank effects in a context where both candidates win and have similar formal political power while their ranks may differ. This allows us to build on work, such as Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) that examine rank dynamics in single-member plurality.[1] Rank effects still exist in multi-member plurality systems, yet the particular forms in which they manifest themselves—the first place effect—and the mechanisms by which they come about—not through parties—differ from existing work. While this paper does not ultimately pin down a mechanism, we discuss some possibilities and provide some suggestive evidence against other plausible mechanisms. These results are the first step towards a deeper understanding of the impacts of rank-based decision-making.

2. Institutional background

2.1. Local Governments in the Philippines

This paper examines Philippine elections at the province, municipality, and village levels. We focus on how rank in multi-member legislatures affects the probability of running for and winning higher office. In particular, we examine whether village councilors run for village chair, municipal councilors run for municipal vice mayor, and provincial councilors run for provincial vice governor. A summary of the relevant information on these positions is given in Table 1.

We begin by describing villages, the smallest unit of local governance in the Philippines. There are 42,046 villages throughout the Philippines, with an average population of 2,400 inhabitants. Each village is headed by the *punong barangay* (village chair), charged with general executive and legislative functions such as drafting and implementing ordinances and resolutions, enacting the budget, as well as delivering basic goods and services (LGC Book 3 Title 3 Chapters 3 and 4). All villages have one legislative district and the *sangguniang barangay* (village council), presided by the village chair, is composed of 7 regular council members. The village council is tasked with creating ordinances and resolutions for their village constituency. Village elections take place every three years. All village positions face a three-term limit regardless of the length of term.

Each village has exactly one village chair and 7 elected councilors. The position of village chair is elected through single-member plurality voting, whereas the village councilors are elected through multi-member plurality voting. For the village council elections, each voter may vote for as many as 7 councilors, and the 7 councilors with the highest number of votes obtained comprise the village council. Village candidates are not affiliated with any political party, so voters can vote for individual candidates.[2] Note that the multi-member plurality council elections will be the unit of analysis when we consider rank effects.

A collection of villages forms a municipality. There are 1,634 municipalities in the country with an average population of roughly 61,800 inhabitants. The executive branch of the municipality is headed by a mayor and vice mayor, whose roles and responsibilities include enacting the budget, providing public

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Table 1
Political System in Philippine Local Government.

Level of Government	Executive Position/s	Executive Voting System	Legislative Position	Legislative Voting System	Number of Council Seats	Constitutional Roles of Council Members
Village	Chair	Single-member plurality	Councilor	Multi-member plurality	7	Same across ranks
Municipality or City	Mayor and Vice Mayor	Single-member plurality	Councilor	Multi-member plurality	8	Same across ranks
Province	Governor and Vice Governor	Single-member plurality	Board Member	Multi-member plurality	10	Same across ranks

Note: In the remainder of the paper, we use the terms provincial board members and provincial councilors interchangeably. In addition, we use municipalities to refer to both cities and municipalities to simplify the exposition.

goods, and implementing ordinances and resolutions (LGC Book 3 Title 3 Chapter 3 Articles 1 and 2). The municipality's legislature is headed by the municipal council. The municipal council is composed of 8 councilors, also elected via plurality-at-large voting, and with each councilor holding a constitutionally equivalent position.[3] Municipal boards are in charge of passing and approving ordinances and resolutions (LGC Book 3 Title 3 Chapter 3 Article 3). Mayors, vice mayors and municipal council members have three year terms with a term limit of three consecutive terms.

Voting at the municipal level goes as follows: Municipal mayors and vice mayors are elected via single-member plurality voting, whereas the municipal council members are elected through multi-member plurality voting, with voters voting for as many councilors as the number of municipal council seats. Council votes are cast for individual candidates and not for a set of party candidates.

Several municipalities in turn comprise a province. Provinces are the most aggregated local government in the Philippines. There are 81 provinces in the country with an average population of 1.25 million people. The executive branch of the province is led by a governor and a vice governor. Among their responsibilities include enacting the budget, appointing provincial officials, and implementing ordinances and resolutions (LGC Book 3 Title 4 Chapter 3 Articles 1 and 2). The legislative branch of the province consists of the provincial council. Its responsibilities include the approval and passing of new ordinances and resolutions as well as licenses (LGC Book 3 Title 4 Chapter 3 Article 3). The council is composed of 10 members, elected via a plurality-at-large voting procedure and with constitutionally equivalent functions and responsibilities.[4] Governors, vice governors and provincial council members have three year terms with a three consecutive term limit.

Voting at the province level follows similar processes as in the municipal and village levels. The governor and vice governor are elected through single-member plurality voting, whereas the provincial councilors are elected via multi-member plurality voting, again with as many votes per voter as council seats. The personalistic character of voting in local elections belies the unstable nature of political parties in the Philippines (Hicken, 2009). Candidates consistently shift from one party to another across electoral years, and sometimes even during a single election season.

The executive positions are often thought of as the most desirable local office, owing to their significant control of the budget and thus over the choice of public works projects. It is thus common for legislators—the village, municipal, and provincial councilors—to aspire for their jurisdictions' executive offices. That is, village councilors aspire to be village chairs, municipal councilors seek the mayorship and vice mayorship, and provincial councilors hope to become governors and vice governors. This claim is supported by qualitative scholars of the Philippines. For example, Sidel (1999) argues that the position of mayor is a major prize, the benefits associated with it being *"the awarding of building permits, the passage of municipal zoning ordinances, the use of government-owned land, the allocation of public works, the approval of reclamation projects…[and] the awarding of petty monopoly franchises and concessions"*. It is also worth noting that a councilor "jumping the line" is uncommon—only 0.02% of village councilors run for municipal mayor or vice mayor and only 0.01% of municipal councilors run for provincial governor or vice governor.

In summary, the Philippine political system is an appealing context for our study and clearly provides a structure that lends itself to testable hypotheses. First, councilors are of varying rank while having similar institutional powers, thus controlling for institutional differences that may confound our results. Second, the appeal of local executive positions makes them the obvious next step for councilors. The choice of outcome variable—running for and winning executive office—is thus straightforward. Third, the personalistic nature of Philippine politics allows for the testing of alternative mechanisms beyond selection by political parties.

3. Data

The dependent variables of interest are whether a candidate runs in, and wins, a subsequent election for a higher position. Table 1 shows the executive positions that the corresponding legislative councilors run for. The elections data do not contain numeric politician identifiers, so individuals are determined using a name matching technique that matches *both* first and last names of candidates within the same province. This is done for two reasons. First, we match at the province level because it is very uncommon and costly for candidates to run in provinces different from their own. Second, we do this to prevent false matches—the larger the constituency considered, the higher probability of having similar names. In Appendix A, we consider other more stringent matching techniques where we match, in addition to first and last names, the suffix, the middle initial or the middle name. Results are robust to these stricter matching rules.

The main independent variable is a candidate's rank, which is based on the total votes obtained in the candidate's respective leg-

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[3] While municipalities have 8 councilors regardless of size, cities may have from 10 to 36 councilors. As before, the same voting rules (i.e. multi-member plurality voting) apply.

[4] Although most provinces have 10 council members, the number of council seats varies according to their size: ranging from 6 for the smallest provinces to 16 for the largest provinces. But even these cases follow the same voting procedures as do conventional councils: voters may vote for as many councilors as there are council seats in their respective districts.

islative district. We exclude from our analysis cases where multiple candidates tie for the same rank.[5]

Our elections data contain the name, constituency, votes obtained and party affiliation (except for village level) of all candidates. Our data spans province and municipal elections from 1988 to 2016. Provincial and municipal elections are held every three years since 1992. The provincial dataset contains 3,274 observations, while the municipal dataset contains 29,294 observations. Village elections are also held every three years, although they have been postponed several times in the past. Given that earlier village elections are done manually, election records are only available from 2002, 2007, 2010 and 2013. However, because only the winning candidates are listed in the 2002 and 2007 election returns, we drop 2002 from our regressions as we are unable to accurately construct the variable for the probability of running in the subsequent election. The final village dataset contains 160,192 observations.[6]

Auxiliary datasets are discussed in Appendix B.

4. Identification strategy

Establishing rank effects—the impact of rank on the probability of running for or winning higher office—is the central contribution of this paper. In particular, we provide evidence for the first place effect, where we show that, holding other factors constant, councilors who rank first are more likely to run for and win higher office than councilors who rank second. However, comparing first and second placers and their political outcomes presents an identification challenge and suffers from selection concerns. Candidates who finish first may garner the most votes due to social networks (Cruz et al., 2017), resources (Gerber, 1998), innate ability (Mondak, 1995) and other factors (Lee, 2008; Ansolabehere et al., 2001). In this case, the ideal experiment is to take two otherwise similar individuals, randomly assign them the label of being first and second and observe their eventual political decisions.

To mimic a randomized design, we employ a two-pronged identification strategy that exploits a unique institutional feature of the Philippine local government and utilizes the standard close elections regression discontinuity approach. First, we only consider elections for positions with at least two winners to guarantee that rank, not other extraneous factors, is driving our results. Second, following the rank effects literature, we compare candidates who barely ranked first with those who barely ranked second. This identification strategy allows us to skirt around selection issues and compare two individuals with *ex ante* similar characteristics.[7]

Studying all three levels of local government in the Philippines, we estimate the following regression at the provincial, municipal and village levels. In each scenario, politician i refers to a provincial, municipal or village councilor while position p refers to the office of the provincial vice governor, municipal vice mayor or village chair, respectively.

$$Candidacy_{ipt+k} = \alpha + \beta First_{it} + \quad f(MV_{it}) + First_{it} \times f(MV_{it}) + \epsilon_{it}$$
$$Election_{ipt+k} = \alpha + \beta First_{it} + \quad f(MV_{it}) + First_{it} \times f(MV_{it}) + \epsilon_{it}$$
$$\forall i \; s.t. \; MV_{it} \qquad\qquad\qquad \in [-h, h]$$

(1)

where $Candidacy_{ipt+k}$ ($Election_{ipt+k}$) is 1 if politician i runs for (wins[8]) higher office p in election year $t+k$[9], $First_{it}$ is 1 if politician i is ranked first (0 if ranked second) in election year t, MV_{it} is the margin of victory between the first and second placers and $f(\cdot)$ are linear, quadratic and cubic functions of the running variable. The optimal bandwidth value h is given by the bandwidth selection procedure used: Calonico et al. (2014) and Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012). Robust standard errors are clustered at the level of the constituency.

5. Empirical results

Fig. 1 shows the existence of first place effects in all three levels of local government in the Philippines. The x-axis variable, *'vote share difference between first and second'*, is equal to either the first placer's vote share minus the second placer's vote share for the first placer (which is positive and to the right of the cutoff), or the second placer's vote share minus the first placer's vote share for the second placer (which is negative and to the left of the cutoff).[10] The y-axis is either the probability of running for (blue circles and curves) or winning (red triangles and curves) higher office in the next election. Graphical analysis provides suggestive evidence of a discontinuous and large increase in the probability of running for and winning higher office for first placers compared to second placers.

Table 2 presents estimated coefficients from Eq. 1. The dependent variables are either the probability of running for ($Candidacy$, $t+k$) or winning ($Election$, $t+k$) higher office—vice governor for the province, vice mayor for the municipality and village chair for the village. Consistent with regression discontinuity designs, we show robustness of results by varying our choice of the control function $f(\cdot)$ and the bandwidth h. Columns 2 and 3 use the full sample and include quadratic and cubic functions of the running variable. For specifications using optimal bandwidth procedures, Columns 5 and 7 estimate local linear regressions with the Calonico et al. (2014) and Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection methods. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal bandwidth value for the respective methods. To make sense of coefficient magnitudes, Column 1 shows the second place mean, which is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the close second placer.[11] Finally, the number of observations is reported in brackets.

Table 2 corroborates the graphical evidence: simply being labeled first versus second significantly increases the probability of running and winning for all levels of government. In other words, keeping other factors constant, current rank matters significantly in increasing the future likelihood of running for and winning a higher position.

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[5] Including elections with tied candidates in the analysis does not change our results. The proportion of elections for which candidates tied for first is negligible: 0.05% for provincial elections, 0.3% for municipal elections and 2% for village elections.

[6] Specifically, the provincial dataset includes 9 election cycles for each of the 81 provinces, with 6,469 candidates running, of which 3,274 are first and second placers. The municipal dataset contains 9 election cycles for each of the 1,634 municipalities, with 119,670 candidates running, of which 29,294 are first and second placers. The village dataset covers 2 election cycles for each of the 42,046 villages, with 573,908 candidates, of which 160,192 are first and second placers.

[7] Owing to this design, bunching at the cutoff is not possible. Specifically, for every first place candidate, we have a counterpart second placer, which implies that we cannot have imbalance in this empirical setup. In Fig. C1, we show that observations are symmetric around the cutoff.

[8] The $Election_{ipt+k}$ variable is defined as winning not conditional on running. Hence, the dummy variable is equal to one when politician i wins, and zero if politician i loses or does not run for higher office p.

[9] As a general rule, k = 3, although there are years when village elections are held after 5 years.

[10] Because of our multi-member plurality setup, we define vote share as the number of votes obtained by the first or second place candidate, divided by the total number of votes garnered by all candidates.

[11] We follow the definition from Anagol and Fujiwara (2016), who use a linear specification and the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) bandwidth to compute for this mean.
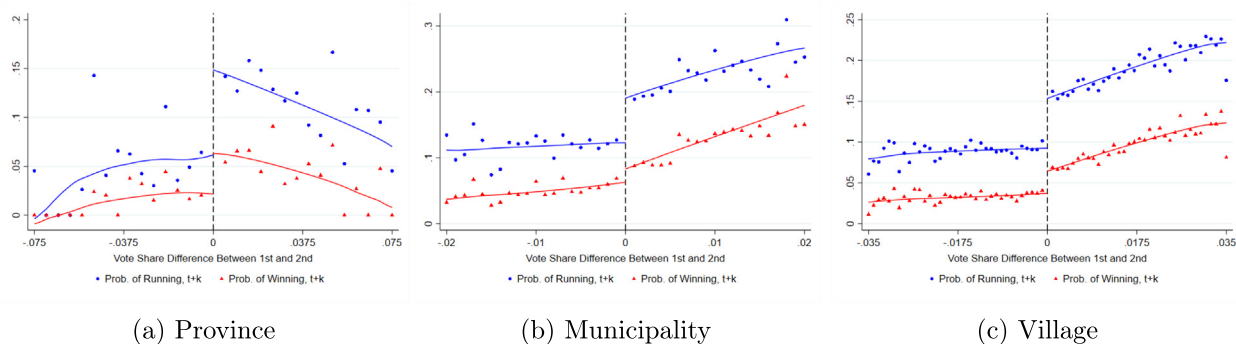
Fig. 1. First Place Effect *Note:* Horizontal axis shows the vote share difference between the first and second placers (i.e. a positive vote margin implies ranking first and a negative vote margin implies ranking second). Each circle (triangle) corresponds to the unconditional mean of running (winning) within 0.005 or 0.001 intervals of the vote margin. Solid curves are smoothed local polynomials on either side of the discontinuity.

Table 2
First Place Effect.

	Second Place Mean (1)	Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Province							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.056	0.0845	0.0868	0.046	0.0925	0.013	0.0472
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0148)	(0.0178)	[N = 2,614]	(0.0180)	[N = 1,356]	(0.0338)
Election, $t + k$	0.021	0.0356	0.0422	0.039	0.0398	0.012	0.0265
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0115)	(0.0133)	[N = 2,458]	(0.0148)	[N = 1,260]	(0.0228)
Municipality							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.122	0.0805	0.0749	0.014	0.0643	0.006	0.0546
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00618)	(0.00656)	[N = 23,258]	(0.00812)	[N = 14,972]	(0.0110)
Election, $t + k$	0.057	0.0383	0.0287	0.012	0.0175	0.006	0.0113
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00465)	(0.00520)	[N = 21,998]	(0.00651)	[N = 14,384]	(0.00875)
Village							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.091	0.0674	0.0636	0.025	0.0614	0.008	0.0562
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00228)	(0.00245)	[N = 134,472]	(0.00302)	[N = 70,704]	(0.00485)
Election, $t + k$	0.035	0.0320	0.0289	0.026	0.0278	0.008	0.0236
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00167)	(0.00179)	[N = 135,248]	(0.00213)	[N = 71,446]	(0.00342)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning higher office: vice governor for province, vice mayor for municipality and village chair for village regressions. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 2–3 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 5 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 7 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal value for each procedure. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

First place effects on running for the provincial level range from 5–9% (from a second placer's baseline mean of 6%) while those on winning range from 3–4% (from a base of 2%). Municipal level coefficients are slightly smaller than the provincial estimates: coefficients on running span from 5–8% (from a base of 12%) while coefficients on winning go from 1–4% (from a base of 6%). For the village level, the coefficients are also slightly smaller than those for the municipal level: estimates for running wander around 6–7% (from a base of 9%) and estimates for winning vary from 2–3% (from a base of 4%).

The following are key observations from our empirical results. First, the estimated coefficients are stable, statistically significant and generally robust to using different control functions and bandwidth selection methods. This holds for all levels of local government. Second, the coefficients are substantively meaningful. For example, the provincial estimates show almost a doubling of a candidate's propensity to run simply by being labeled first, with municipal and village level estimates showing a 45–74% increase in this probability. These results provide evidence for the individual effect of rank while controlling for other confounding factors. This significant and robust finding adds to and complements the existing body of results in the rank effects literature, showing the impact of rank on political promotion in multi-member plurality systems.

6. Robustness checks

6.1. Covariate balance

As an indirect test of our identification assumption, we check whether first and second placers differ on predetermined variables. The idea behind this placebo test is to investigate whether preexisting differences in variables may be explaining the differences in post-treatment outcomes. Graphical evidence shows that covariates are smooth around the cutoff point (see Fig. C2). More formally, Table C1 presents results for regressions with the following as the dependent variables: probability of running and winning, vote share and membership in the party of the politician in higher office in the previous election, as well as past candidacies (i.e. number of times the candidate ran in the past). Reassuringly, all variables are balanced and support the validity of our empirical strategy.

6.2. Robustness to bandwidths

Fig. D1 shows how our coefficient estimates on candidacy and election vary with the chosen bandwidth value. For a wide range of values, our estimates are relatively stable and remain statisti-

cally significant for all levels of government. As expected, results on running are more robust to bandwidth values than the results on winning. While our earlier tables presented estimates using only the optimal bandwidths, this exercise proves that for many other bandwidth values, our results continue to hold.

6.3. Identifying politicians

Consistent with literature in political economy (Querubin, 2016), we identify politicians across time by matching names. A potential issue is that our results may be affected by name mismatches. For example, without the suffix name, we may consider both father/uncle and son as one, potentially causing overestimates to the first place effect if we think that males are more likely to rank first.[12] To address this and other possible sources of mismatch, we perform two checks. First, we use more stringent matching techniques, where in addition to matching first and last names, we also match the suffix name, the middle initial or the middle name. Tables A2, A3 and A4 show that our results are robust to these matching techniques. This implies that while mismatches may occur, they do not significantly impact the results that we find. Second, we identify the most common last names and drop observations with those last names. The idea behind the test is that mismatches occur more frequently in individuals with less unique last names. For example, for politicians with the popular surname 'Dela Cruz', it is possible that different individuals are mistakenly considered one and the same. Dropping individuals with common surnames from the sample, we find that our results are robust to this exercise (see Table A5).

7. Other results

7.1. Other rank effects

In this subsection, we examine the effects of other ranks on political promotion. Exploiting the multi-member nature of councils in the Philippines allows us to uncover the rank effect not just for the first placer but also for lower ranked candidates.

For example, in the seven-member village council, we can study rank effects comparing second and third placers, up until sixth and seventh placers. In Fig. 2, we show rank effects between n^{th} and $n + 1^{th}$ placers for $n > 1$.[13] Effects see a sharp drop after $n = 1$: that is, first place effects for running and winning are significantly greater than other rank effects. Other rank effects remain generally statistically significant, although the effect significantly diminishes as one goes down the rank. The size of the constituency seems to be negatively associated with the presence of other rank effects: for the provincial level, only the first place effect exists; for the municipal level, all but four rank effects are present; for the village level, all rank effects are positive and significant. We therefore conclude that while some ranks matter, the first place effect is 3–6 times larger than the second place effect, and an order of magnitude greater than the rest.

7.2. Other positions

Are there rank effects for running and winning for other positions? So far, we have centered our discussion on rank effects on political promotion, where ending up in a higher rank leads to running for and winning a higher position.[14] In this subsection, we present results for rank effects on: (i) promotion to the highest position within a constituency, and (ii) re-election to the same position.

Instead of considering the immediate position above the councilor, we now test whether the same rank effects are present when provincial and municipal councilors run for the highest executive position: the provincial governor or the municipal mayor.[15] In Table F1, we show that at the provincial level, councilors do not seek the office of the governor, and there is no difference in running for or winning as governor across ranks. While we see statistically significant rank effects for municipal councilors running for mayor, the magnitudes are much smaller (around 1–2%) than those for vice mayor (5–8%). This result implies that while the first place effect leads to political promotion, a councilor's prospects is still limited by the hierarchy of political offices—they cannot make too big of a jump from municipal councilor to mayor or from provincial councilor to governor.

Next, we explore the case for re-election, when councilors run for the same position in the succeeding election. Table F2 shows that rank effects are negative when considering the same position: first placers are less likely than second placers to run for and win the same position in the following election. Combining this with our main finding, this suggests that political promotion is a path reserved for first placers, leaving second placers only with prospects for political re-election.

8. Discussion of potential mechanisms

This section provides a brief discussion of the potential mechanisms driving the rank effect. While we do not pin down the primary mechanism in this paper, a clear statement of the underlying mechanisms at play will be beneficial for future work.

First, one potential mechanism is that rank effects are a product of intra-party decision-making (Folke et al., 2016; Merillainen and Tukiainen, 2018; Cirone et al., 2021). Parties use rank as a way to determine who is popular, and hence who to promote within the party. At the conceptual level, there is little evidence that parties in the Philippines exert top-down organizational control. Rather, party decision-making is the result of a bottom-up process that aggregates the preferences of powerful political families operating within the party (Hicken, 2009). We also do not see empirical support for such a hypothesis. We test for potential coordination by political parties by including a control for party alignment and its interaction with the rank variable. We define party alignment in two ways: (i) whether the provincial (municipal) councilor belongs to the same party as the vice governor (vice mayor), and (ii) whether the first place councilor belongs to the same party as the second place councilor. Table 3 shows that this mechanism is seemingly not the driving force behind the rank effect since the interaction of rank and party alignment is not statistically significant in most specifications. Even with the inclusion of the party variable, the rank effect remains robust and significant. We also explore whether parties are more likely to financially support first placers than second placers. To test this, we collect a novel dataset on campaign contributions and expenditures, where we use data on contributions from political parties as our main dependent variable. We find that first placers do not receive more donations from their party in the subsequent elections than second placers (see Table G3). While this evidence does not rule out all the ways by which parties may influence rank effects, we consider this prelim-

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[12] A suffix name is normally used for male children or parents who share the same first and last names—Sr. for Senior, Jr. for Junior, II, III and so on.

[13] Alternatively, we present the corresponding RD figures in Appendix E.

[14] We base our definition of the 'higher position' on the constitutional rule of succession. For example, when municipal vice mayors vacate their position, the highest ranking councilor replaces the vice mayor.

[15] For the village, there is no higher position than the village chair, which subsumes the responsibilities of the local chief executive and the head of the local village council.
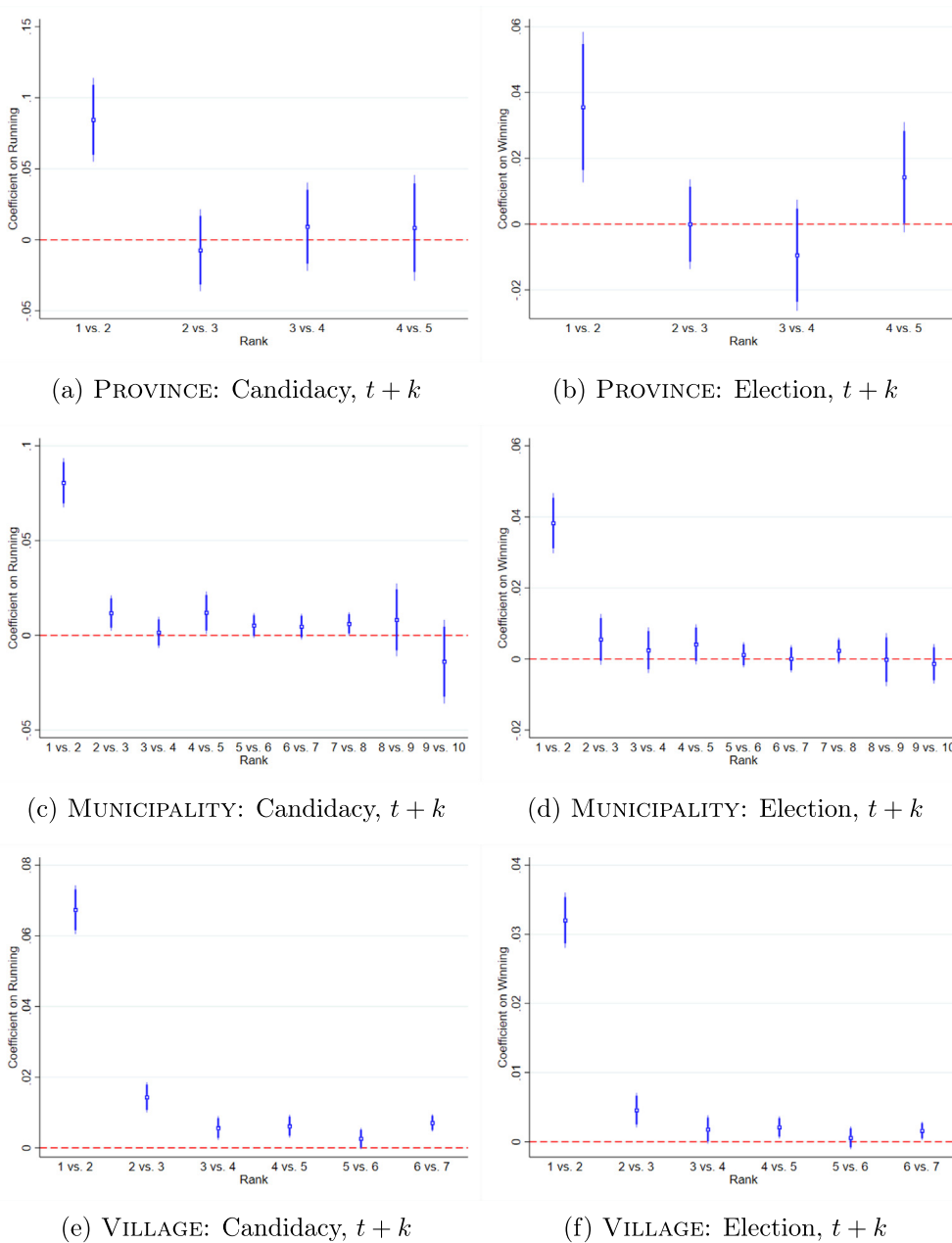
(a) PROVINCE: Candidacy, $t + k$

(b) PROVINCE: Election, $t + k$

(c) MUNICIPALITY: Candidacy, $t + k$

(d) MUNICIPALITY: Election, $t + k$

(e) VILLAGE: Candidacy, $t + k$

(f) VILLAGE: Election, $t + k$

Fig. 2. Other Rank Results *Note:* Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning higher office. The horizontal axis shows the comparison between consecutive ranks. The blue circle is the coefficient estimate, with the thick blue bar showing the 90% confidence interval and the thin blue bar showing the 95% confidence interval.

inary evidence that implies that rank effect may be explained by mechanisms beyond party alignment.

An alternative mechanism is voter coordination. Voters use rank as a signal to coordinate on popular candidates (Anagol and Fujiwara, 2016).[16] Candidates know this, and hence choose to run. Such a mechanism would support a growing literature that links the spread of information provision with the ability to coordinate over preferred candidates (Adida et al., 2020). We test this indirectly by comparing the rank effect in areas where voter coordination may have greater impacts on politicians' decision-making. Following the extant literature, our control variable voter turnout proxies for voter

coordination (broadly defined), such that the higher the turnout the greater the level of coordination (Arias et al. (2019); Rolfe (2012), Rolfe (2012); Cruz et al. (2020), Cruz et al. (2020)). Table G1 shows that the first place effect does not differ heterogeneously with respect to voter turnout. The coefficients on voter turnout and its interaction with rank are not statistically significant and relatively small (in absolute value).[17] In our setting, voter coordination does not seem to explain the existence of the rank effect. As a caveat, it

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[16] Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) suggest rational voters strategically coordinating to vote for the runner-up as a mechanism to explain why second place candidates are substantially more likely to run in and win first-past-the-post elections.

[17] Because the voter turnout variable is only available for half of our sample, our province-level results suffer from smaller sample sizes and present null rank effects. Even if the inclusion of voter turnout may have weakened the rank effect, that the turnout variable itself is not significant seems to suggest a minimal, if any, role of voter coordination in driving our results.

Table 3
Party Alignment.

	Full Sample		Optimal Bandwidth	
	Quadratic (1)	Cubic (2)	Linear (3)	Linear (4)
Board Member & Vice Governor in the Same Party				
First	0.0625	0.0697	0.0785	−0.0323
	(0.0205)	(0.0243)	(0.0259)	(0.0445)
Same Party	−0.0237	−0.0169	−0.0149	−0.0961
	(0.0164)	(0.0198)	(0.0206)	(0.0337)
First × Same Party	0.0460	0.0407	0.0363	0.178
	(0.0304)	(0.0388)	(0.0412)	(0.0595)
Second Place Mean	.042	.042	.042	.042
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT=.046	IK=.013
N	3,130	3,130	2,484	1,278
Board Members (First and Second Placers) in the Same Party				
First	0.0931	0.0887	0.0942	0.0159
	(0.0291)	(0.0339)	(0.0332)	(0.0518)
Same Party	−0.0176	−0.0230	−0.0221	−0.0264
	(0.0198)	(0.0227)	(0.0236)	(0.0394)
First × Same Party	−0.0127	0.0029	−0.0025	0.0578
	(0.0378)	(0.0434)	(0.0424)	(0.0560)
Second Place Mean	.056	.056	.056	.056
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT=.046	IK=.013
N	3,274	3,274	2,614	1,356
	Full Sample		Optimal Bandwidth	
	Quadratic (1)	Cubic (2)	Linear (3)	Linear (4)
Councilor & Vice Mayor in the Same Party				
First	0.0871	0.0817	0.0750	0.0610
	(0.0092)	(0.0096)	(0.0126)	(0.0169)
Same Party	−0.0313	−0.0347	−0.0258	−0.0351
	(0.0074)	(0.0083)	(0.0104)	(0.0145)
First × Same Party	−0.0129	−0.0166	−0.0204	−0.0119
	(0.0122)	(0.0133)	(0.0167)	(0.0227)
Second Place Mean	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT = 0.014	IK = 0.006
N	29,290	29,290	23,254	14,970
Councilors (First and Second Placers) in the Same Party				
First	0.0688	0.0693	0.0592	0.0587
	(0.0090)	(0.0102)	(0.0125)	(0.0167)
Same Party	−0.0290	−0.0244	−0.0233	−0.0146
	(0.0075)	(0.0082)	(0.0106)	(0.0145)
First × Same Party	0.0200	0.0135	0.0094	−0.0077
	(0.0121)	(0.0134)	(0.0165)	(0.0224)
Second Place Mean	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT = 0.014	IK = 0.006
N	29,294	29,294	23,258	14,972

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for vice governor (vice mayor). The party variable is an indicator for whether the provincial (municipal) councilor is in the same party as the incumbent vice governor (vice mayor). The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 1–2 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 3 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 4 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

is worth noting that other alternative models of voter coordination have not been explored.

We also test two more potential mechanisms: greater media exposure for first placers and first placers' better on-the-job performance. We show that both mechanisms do not seem to be driving our main results. To save space we move our discussion of these mechanisms to Appendix G.

9. Conclusion

This paper has provided evidence for the link between rank and political promotion in multi-member plurality legislative elections in the Philippines. We document the first place effect: barely ranking first in legislative councils leads to a significant increase in the probability of running for higher office. The first place effect is unique; the rank effect for second versus third as well as subsequent comparisons gives us much smaller or insignificant magnitudes. The standard mechanism in the extant literature—political

parties making selections based on rank—does not seem to apply in this case. Finally, suggestive evidence shows that other potential mechanisms such as voter coordination, media exposure, access to resources, political appointments and performance do not explain the result.

This paper's main contribution is to establish the empirical relationship between rank and political promotion in a multi-member plurality electoral system. The main result, the first place effect, is robust across different levels of government, highly significant, and is substantive. The paper also opens up avenues to consider novel non-party based mechanisms to explain the first place effect.

This paper will hopefully lead to further work that will tease out the relevant mechanisms behind rank effects in multi-member plurality elections. Informal norms within legislative councils or politician beliefs are among the many plausible mechanisms that may explain this result. Overall, given the richness of political systems the world over, this paper is a step forward in our understanding of how rank affects politics.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgments

We are deeply indebted to Santosh Anagol, Allen Hicken, Timur Kuran, Edmund Malesky, Livia Schubiger, Shing-Yi Wang, Erik Wibbels and Maisy Wong for their guidance and advising on this project. We would also like to thank Anna Cororaton, Nicolas Fliess, Marco Morucci, Ngoc Phan and Mateo Villamizar for insightful comments, and Teresita Cadiben from the Commission of Elections for sharing institutional knowledge on election-related issues. All errors are our own.

Appendix A. Name matching

How do we identify politicians across time and their family members given our data? For some existing studies, identification follows naturally from definition given the availability of data. For example, Folke et al. (2016) and Eggers and Hainmueller (2009) use birth registers and historical biographies to identify family connections. However, in the absence of high quality data, we exploit naming conventions to recognize the same politician through time (as is common in the literature in developing countries).

In the Philippines, the naming tradition is as follows:
given_name   middle_name   last_name   suffix_name
Jose Garcia dela Cruz Jr.

The given name may consist of one or more names. Although the middle name is used as in the United States, the main difference is that it must be the mother's maiden name. The middle name is not considered a surname, and the mother's maiden name comes before the father's surname. In the Philippines, only the last name, which comes from the father's last name, is considered an individual's surname. When males get married, no change occurs in their names. For females, however, the usual practice is to take on the spouse's last name. In addition to the usual components, males may also have a suffix name if their given and last names match their father's. Suffixes can be Jr. (or Sr. for fathers), II, III, and so on.

A.1. Matching politicians across time

In the elections data, names of candidates are provided, although some components may be incomplete or missing. The most common source of name discrepancies originates from the shortening of the middle name to just the middle initial (in some years, the same candidate maybe listed as having a middle name 'G' or 'Garcia'). Another potential source is providing a suffix name in some years but not others.

In this section, we test whether our results are robust to using different methods for name matching. Our baseline approach uses the first and last names to match individuals across time. First, we show that including the suffix name, middle initial or the middle name does not change the results. In fact, all estimates remain statistically significant and robust. Tables A2, A3 and A4 present the provincial, municipal and village results using the different methods. Second, we drop observations whose last name belongs to the

Table A1
Distribution of Top 10 Last Names.

Last Name	Frequency	Percent
Dela Cruz	7,472	0.50
Garcia	5,388	0.36
Reyes	5,276	0.35
Ramos	5,076	0.34
Mendoza	4,642	0.31
Bautista	3,822	0.25
Flores	3,761	0.25
Gonzales	3,407	0.23
Santos	3,406	0.23
Fernandez	3,362	0.22
Total	45,612	3.04

Table A2
First Place Effect (Province), by Name Matching Method.

	Second Place Mean (1)	Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
First Name + Last Name + Suffix Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.054	0.0826	0.0838	0.047	0.0904	0.017	0.0497
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0147)	(0.0176)	[N = 2,638]	(0.0176)	[N = 1,294]	(0.0351)
Election, $t + k$	0.021	0.0346	0.0413	0.038	0.0403	0.012	0.0253
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0115)	(0.0133)	[N = 2,452]	(0.0149)	[N = 1,248]	(0.0231)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Initial							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.047	0.0901	0.0921	0.048	0.101	0.014	0.0637
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0139)	(0.0167)	[N = 2,654]	(0.0164)	[N = 1,404]	(0.0316)
Election, $t + k$	0.019	0.0341	0.0402	0.039	0.0377	0.012	0.0164
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0108)	(0.0124)	[N = 2,472]	(0.0137)	[N = 1,280]	(0.0213)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.036	0.0612	0.0616	0.042	0.0642	0.015	0.0353
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0126)	(0.0149)	[N = 2,532]	(0.0154)	[N = 1,442]	(0.0275)
Election, $t + k$	0.015	0.0227	0.0269	0.043	0.0249	0.016	0.0178
	[N = 3,274]	(0.00918)	(0.0106)	[N = 2,560]	(0.0116)	[N = 1,510]	(0.0151)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the province level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning as the vice governor. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 2–3 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 5 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 7 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal value for each procedure. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table A3
First Place Effect (Municipality), by Name Matching Method.

		Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
	Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
First Name + Last Name + Suffix Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.12	0.0782	0.0724	0.013	0.0613	0.006	0.0522
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00613)	(0.00649)	[N = 23,034]	(0.00810)	[N = 14,716]	(0.0110)
Election, $t + k$	0.056	0.0374	0.0282	0.012	0.0185	0.006	0.0124
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00459)	(0.00511)	[N = 21,602]	(0.00647)	[N = 14,100]	(0.00870)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Initial							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.118	0.0828	0.0770	0.012	0.0615	0.006	0.0509
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00599)	(0.00646)	[N = 22,092]	(0.00832)	[N = 13,998]	(0.0113)
Election, $t + k$	0.055	0.0413	0.0319	0.011	0.0184	0.005	0.0131
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00453)	(0.00518)	[N = 21,088]	(0.00667)	[N = 13,380]	(0.00901)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.076	0.0504	0.0473	0.013	0.0369	0.006	0.0250
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00482)	(0.00515)	[N = 22,720]	(0.00656)	[N = 13,938]	(0.00904)
Election, $t + k$	0.037	0.0250	0.0192	0.012	0.0107	0.005	0.00974
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00363)	(0.00402)	[N = 22,244]	(0.00522)	[N = 12,824]	(0.00740)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the municipal level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning as the vice mayor. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 2–3 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 5 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 7 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal value for each procedure. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table A4
First Place Effect (Village), by Name Matching Method.

		Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
	Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
First Name + Last Name + Suffix Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.089	0.0654	0.0618	0.024	0.0593	0.009	0.0568
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00226)	(0.00242)	[N = 132,850]	(0.00302)	[N = 75,424]	(0.00460)
Election, $t + k$	0.035	0.0310	0.0280	0.025	0.0267	0.008	0.0227
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00165)	(0.00177)	[N = 133,738]	(0.00213)	[N = 73,450]	(0.00331)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Initial							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.090	0.0678	0.0639	0.025	0.0613	0.009	0.0596
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00227)	(0.00244)	[N = 133,480]	(0.00302)	[N = 77,298]	(0.00455)
Election, $t + k$	0.035	0.0326	0.0293	0.025	0.0276	0.007	0.0231
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00166)	(0.00178)	[N = 133,446]	(0.00215)	[N = 66,680]	(0.00356)
First Name + Last Name + Middle Name							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.084	0.0646	0.0617	0.026	0.0590	0.010	0.0586
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00221)	(0.00234)	[N = 136,020]	(0.00289)	[N = 81,380]	(0.00428)
Election, $t + k$	0.033	0.0304	0.0279	0.024	0.0248	0.009	0.0228
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00160)	(0.00168)	[N = 132,080]	(0.00209)	[N = 77,046]	(0.00312)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the village level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning as the village chair. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 2–3 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 5 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 7 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal value for each procedure. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table A5
First Place Effect (Excluding Common Last Names).

		Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
	Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Province							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.57	0.0875	0.0897	0.055	0.0950	0.013	0.0511
	[N = 3,159]	(0.0157)	(0.0187)	[N = 2,670]	(0.0177)	[N = 1,300]	(0.0348)
Election, $t + k$	0.021	0.0368	0.0438	0.040	0.0418	0.014	0.0329
	[N = 3,159]	(0.0119)	(0.0138)	[N = 2,416]	(0.0149)	[N = 1,398]	(0.0197)
Municipality							
Candidacy, $t + k$	0.123	0.0813	0.0748	0.013	0.0656	0.007	0.0626

Table A5 (*continued*)

	Second Place Mean (1)	Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
	[N = 28,515]	(0.00625)	(0.00695)	[N = 22,450]	(0.00828)	[N = 15,784]	(0.0107)
Election, t + k	0.056	0.0389	0.0266	0.012	0.0183	0.006	0.0138
	[N = 28,515]	(0.00470)	(0.00515)	[N = 21,382]	(0.00663)	[N = 14,040]	(0.00887)
Village							
Candidacy, t + k	0.091	0.0670	0.0629	0.026	0.0609	0.007	0.0548
	[N = 155,365]	(0.00232)	(0.00248)	[N = 131,848]	(0.00303)	[N = 62,920]	(0.00522)
Election, t + k	0.035	0.0321	0.0287	0.027	0.0280	0.007	0.0229
	[N = 155,365]	(0.00170)	(0.00181)	[N = 132,331]	(0.00214)	[N = 64,386]	(0.00363)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning higher office: vice governor for province, vice mayor for municipality and village chair for village regressions. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 2–3 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 5 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 7 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Columns 4 and 6 provide the optimal value for each procedure. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

top 10 most common last names in the Philippines (see Table A1). This addresses the issue of mismatches due to common names. Comparing Tables 2 and A5, we find that results remain unchanged.

Appendix B. Auxiliary datasets

B.1. Voter information

Voter turnout data can be used to understand the mechanism of voter coordination. We calculate voter turnout in each province and city from 2004 to 2013 by dividing the number of registered to actual voters. Unfortunately, the data is not available for the village level.

B.2. Campaign contributions and expenditures

To control for campaign spending, we obtained the statements of all provincial board members in 2010 and 2013 who ran again in 2013 and 2016, respectively. The dataset includes the percentage of campaign expenditures originating from personal funds, party contributions and contributions from private companies or individuals.

B.3. Ordinances

As objective measures for performance and productivity in the council, we collected a novel dataset of city ordinances from 31 cities in the Philippines. Conditional on choosing the city, we obtained all city ordinances for years which data is available. The

dataset includes thousands of ordinances from 1988–2019, and contains the ordinance title, date of enactment and the names of the sponsors or authors.

B.4. Standing committees

To control for traditions and 'unwritten rules' within the council, we again collected a novel dataset of city council positions for each councilor. It is common practice in newly elected councils to determine the standing committees for the following three-year term. The dataset includes standing committee positions for 25 cities, from 1988 to 2019. The dataset lists all committees and the respective position of each councilor (i.e. chairperson, vice chairperson or member). For some cities which have special positions such as the majority floor leader, minority floor leader, etc., the dataset also notes which councilors are appointed or voted to those positions.

B.5. Online news mentions

An emerging source for news in the Philippines are websites or online platforms of newspapers and broadsheets. To measure media exposure, we scanned the websites of top national and regional newspapers and created an algorithm to count the number of times a particular candidate's name was mentioned. We did this for 29 news sites, scanning all news articles from 2008 to 2019.

Appendix C. Balance

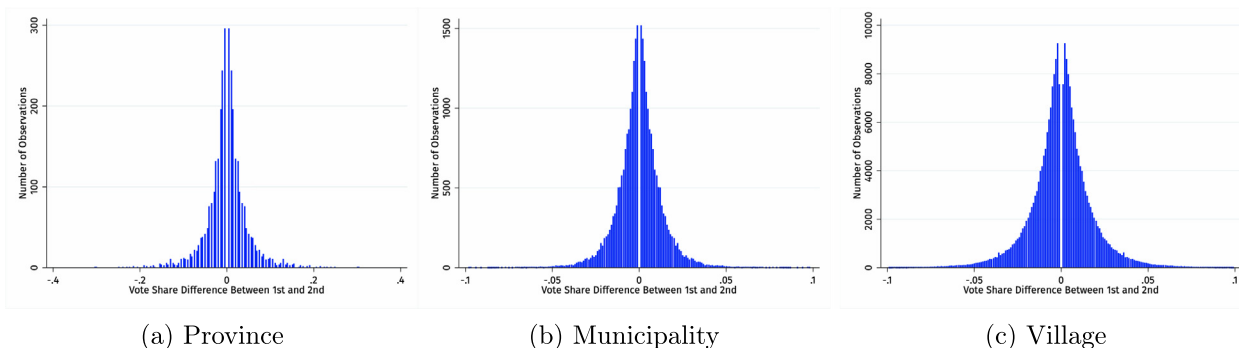(a) Province   (b) Municipality   (c) Village

Fig. C1. Number of Observations Balance *Note:* Horizontal axis shows the vote share bins, which are within 0.005 or 0.001 intervals of the vote margin. The blue bars correspond to the number of observations in each bin. Because of the empirical design, the distribution of observations is symmetric around the cutoff.
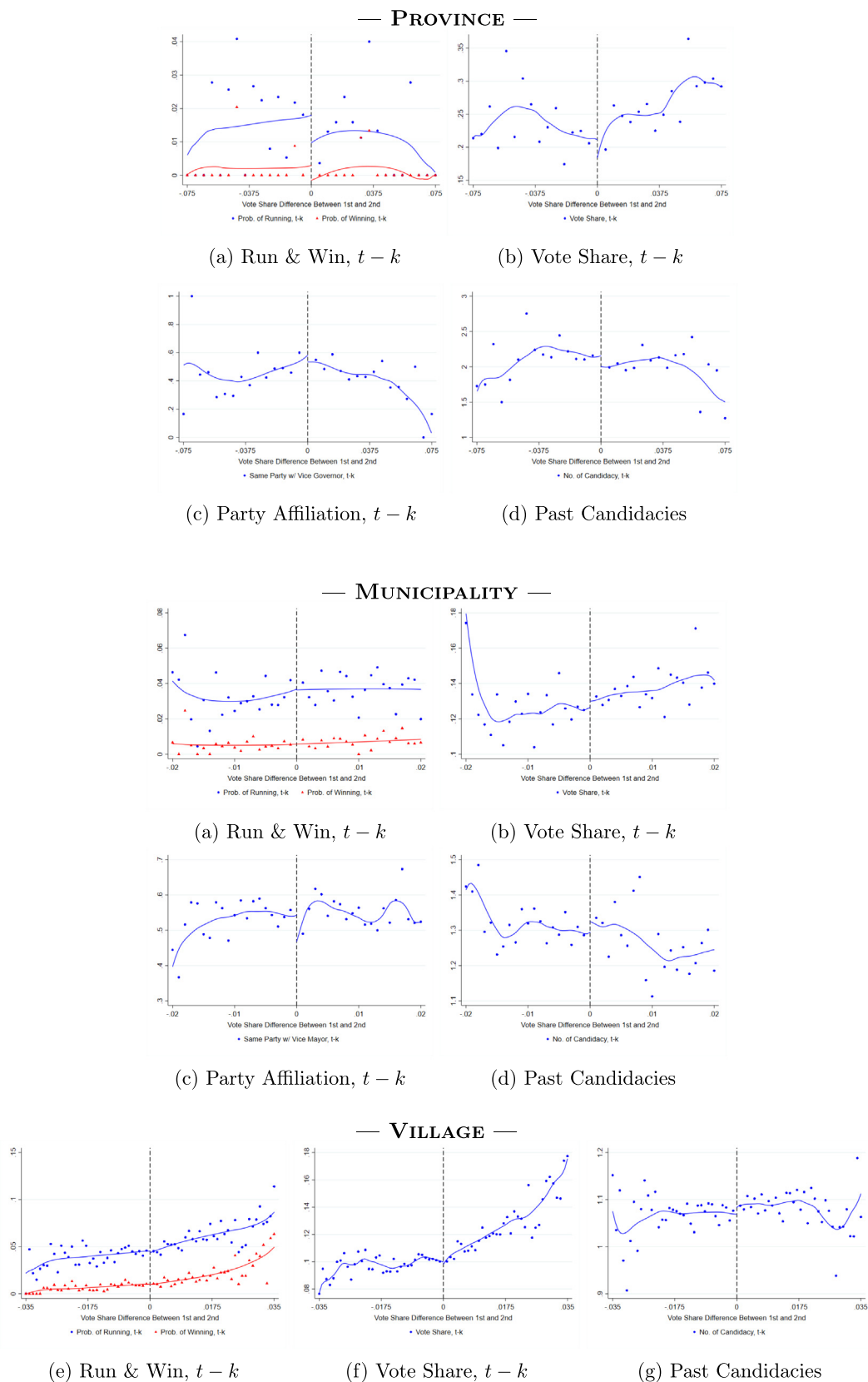
— PROVINCE —

(a) Run & Win, $t-k$

(b) Vote Share, $t-k$

(c) Party Affiliation, $t-k$

(d) Past Candidacies

— MUNICIPALITY —

(a) Run & Win, $t-k$

(b) Vote Share, $t-k$

(c) Party Affiliation, $t-k$

(d) Past Candidacies

— VILLAGE —

(e) Run & Win, $t-k$

(f) Vote Share, $t-k$

(g) Past Candidacies

Fig. C2. Covariate Balance *Note:* Horizontal axis shows the vote margin of the first placer. Dependent variables are the probability of running for or winning higher office, vote shares, party affiliation in the previous election, and past candidacies. Each circle or triangle corresponds to the unconditional mean within 0.005 or 0.001 intervals of the vote margin. Solid curves are smoothed local polynomials on either side of the discontinuity.

Table C1
Placebo Test and Covariate Balance.

	Second Place Mean (1)	Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Optimal Value (2)	Linear (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)
Province					
Candidacy, $t - k$	0.014	0.030	−0.00556	0.023	−0.0121
		[N = 2,344]	(0.00825)	[N = 2,032]	(0.00916)
Election, $t - k$	0.002	0.042	−0.00252	0.017	−0.000270
		[N = 2,694]	(0.00321)	[N = 1,702]	(0.00403)
Vote Share, $t - k$	0.219	0.042	0.0125	0.030	0.00597
		[N = 1,928]	(0.0162)	[N = 1,663]	(0.0185)
Party Affiliation, $t - k$	0.525	0.043	−0.0215	0.016	−0.0725
		[N = 860]	(0.0565)	[N = 494]	(0.0864)
Past Candidacies	2.396	0.042	−0.148	0.031	−0.123
		[N = 2,708]	(0.114)	[N = 2,404]	(0.130)
Municipality					
Candidacy, $t - k$	0.035	0.011	−0.00145	0.006	−0.00479
		[N = 22,102]	(0.00447)	[N = 16,060]	(0.00554)
Election, $t - k$	0.007	0.014	0.000155	0.004	0.00228
		[N = 24,512]	(0.00180)	[N = 11,950]	(0.00304)
Vote Share, $t - k$	0.132	0.013	0.00622	0.007	0.00321
		[N = 14,978]	(0.00526)	[N = 10,592]	(0.00669)
Party Affiliation, $t - k$	0.546	0.011	0.0125	0.004	−0.0442
		[N = 4,735]	(0.0242)	[N = 2,464]	(0.0369)
Past Candidacies	1.41	0.014	0.0499	0.006	0.0421
		[N = 24,508]	(0.0314)	[N = 15,212]	(0.0444)
Village					
Candidacy, $t - k$	0.045	0.019	−0.00120	0.007	0.000834
		[N = 72,016]	(0.00263)	[N = 43,240]	(0.00385)
Election, $t - k$	0.009	0.015	−0.00100	0.004	−0.00175
		[N = 65,406]	(0.00138)	[N = 26,924]	(0.00258)
Vote Share, $t - k$	0.101	0.013	−0.00172	0.004	−0.00350
		[N = 39,961]	(0.00190)	[N = 17,791]	(0.00319)
Past Candidacies	1.073	0.019	0.0169	0.009	0.0206
		[N = 71,084]	(0.0107)	[N = 49,988]	(0.0142)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variables are the probability of running for or winning higher office, vote shares and party affiliation in the previous election and number of past candidacies. The unit of observation is a candidate. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Appendix D. Robustness to bandwidths

(a) PROVINCE: Candidacy, $t + k$

(b) PROVINCE: Election $t + k$

(c) MUNICIPALITY: Candidacy, $t + k$

(d) MUNICIPALITY: Election $t + k$

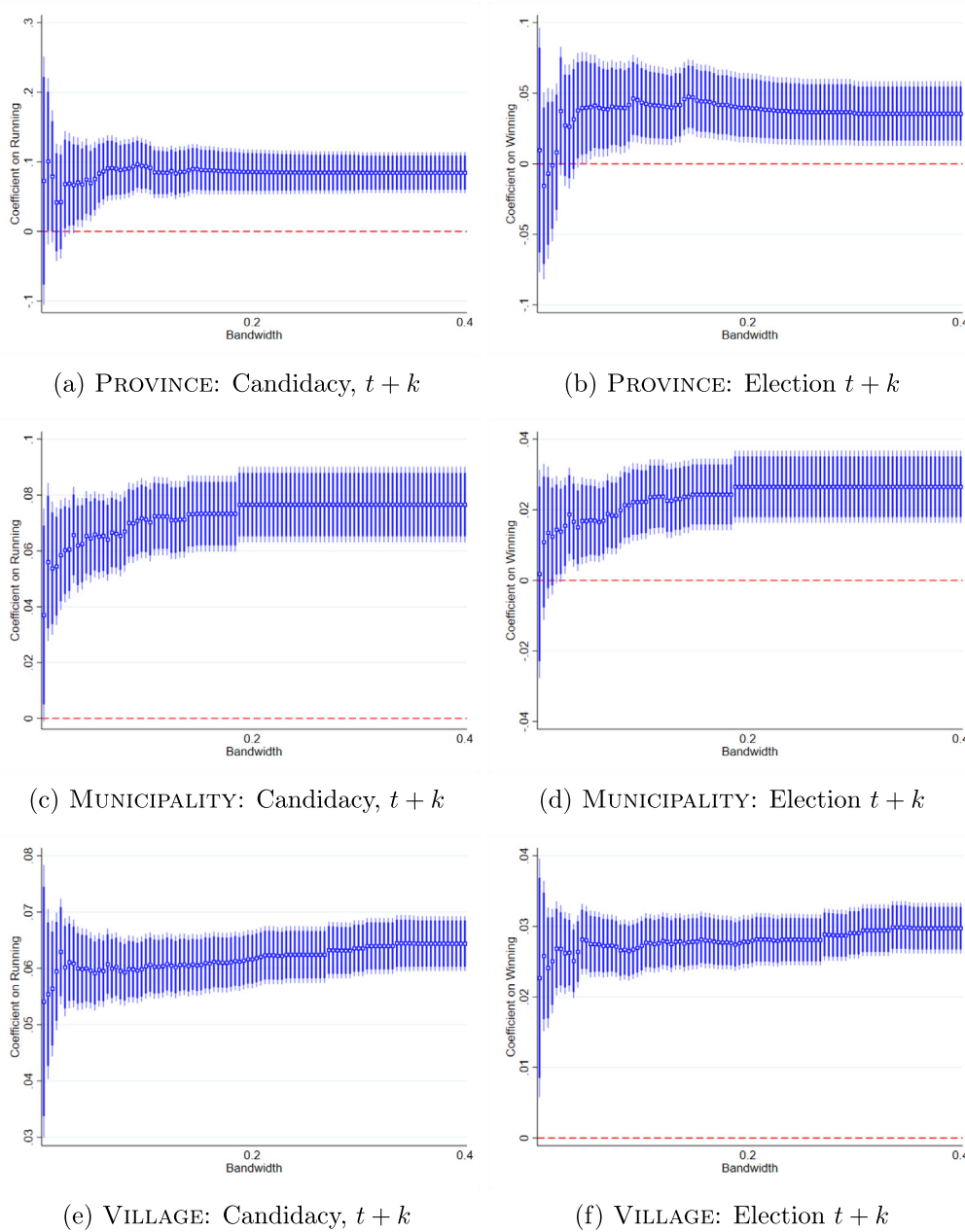(e) VILLAGE: Candidacy, $t + k$

(f) VILLAGE: Election $t + k$

Fig. D1. Robustness to Bandwidths *Note:* Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning higher office. The horizontal axis shows the range of bandwidth values until $h = 0.4$. The blue circle is the coefficient estimate, with the thick blue bar showing the 90% confidence interval and the thin blue bar showing the 95% confidence interval.

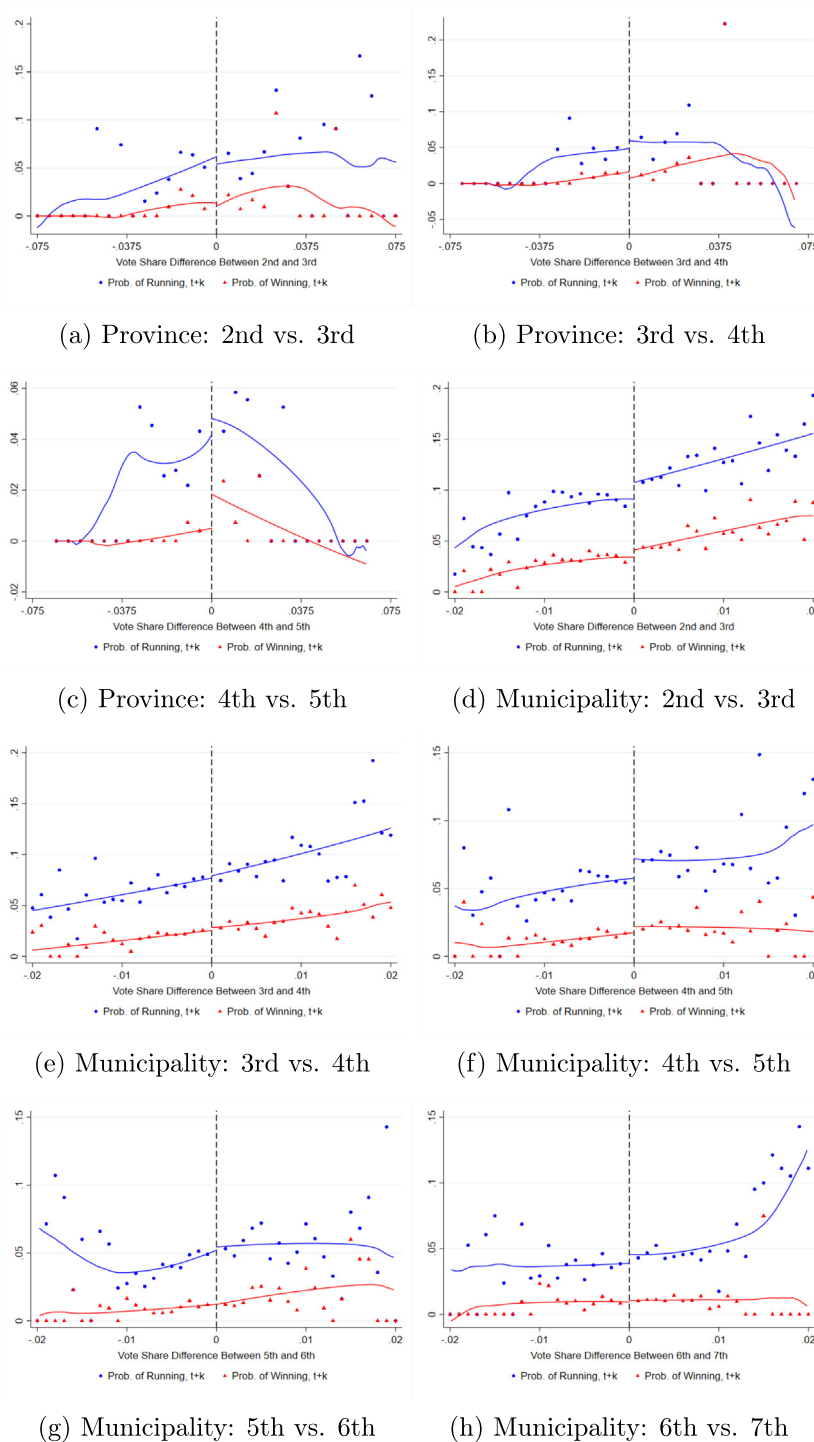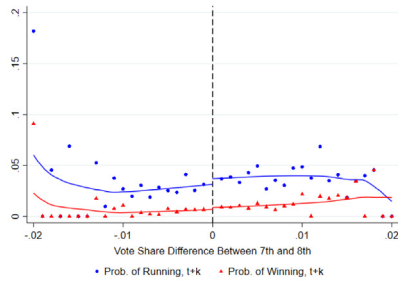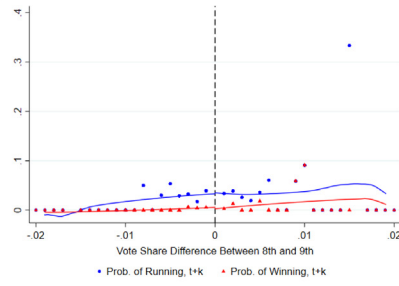## Appendix E. Other rank effects

(see Fig. E1).

(a) Province: 2nd vs. 3rd

(b) Province: 3rd vs. 4th

(c) Province: 4th vs. 5th

(d) Municipality: 2nd vs. 3rd

(e) Municipality: 3rd vs. 4th

(f) Municipality: 4th vs. 5th

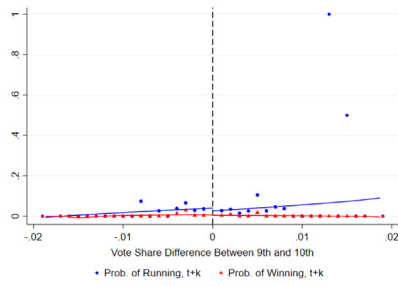(g) Municipality: 5th vs. 6th

(h) Municipality: 6th vs. 7th

Fig. E1. Other Rank Effects *Note:* Horizontal axis shows the vote share difference between the nth and $n+1^{th}$ placers (i.e. a positive vote margin implies ranking n^{th} and a negative vote margin implies ranking $n+1^{th}$). Each circle (triangle) corresponds to the unconditional mean of running (winning) within 0.005 or 0.001 intervals of the vote margin. Solid curves are smoothed local polynomials on either side of the discontinuity.
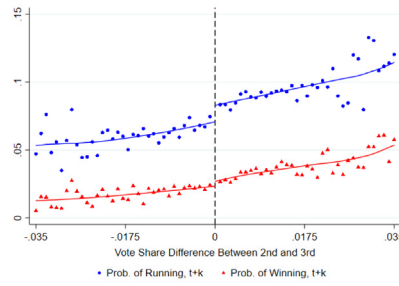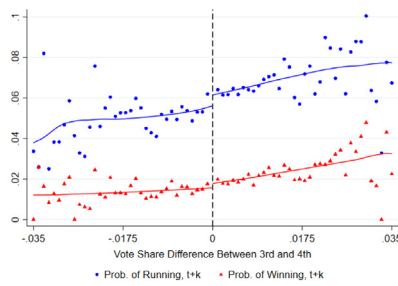
(i) Municipality: 7th vs. 8th

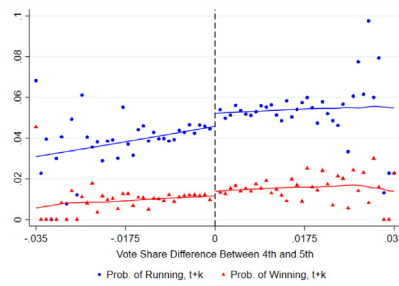(j) Municipality: 8th vs. 9th

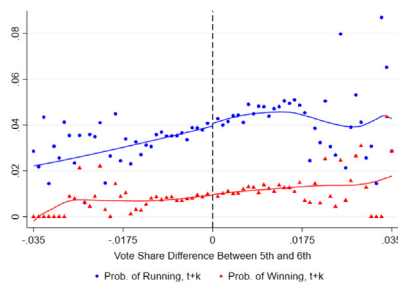(j) Municipality: 9th vs. 10th

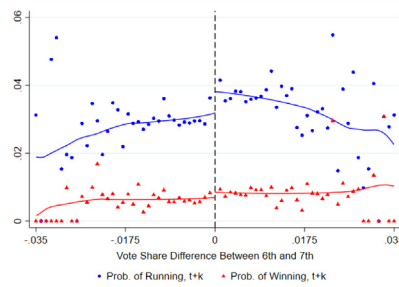(k) Village: 2nd vs. 3rd

(l) Village: 3rd vs. 4th

(m) Village: 4th vs. 5th

(n) Village: 5th vs. 6th

(o) Village: 6th vs. 7th

Fig. 6 (*continued*)

Appendix F. Rank effects for other positions

Appendix G. Potential mechanisms

Table F1
First Place Effect (for the Highest Position).

	Second Place Mean (1)	Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Province							
Candidacy, $t+k$	0.013	−0.00572	−0.00499	0.036	−0.000002	0.011	−0.0195
	[N = 3,274]	(0.00513)	(0.00558)	[N = 2,380]	(0.00696)	[N = 1,198]	(0.0104)
Election, $t+k$	0	0.00251	0.00231	0.027	0.00610	0.012	0.00196
	[N = 3,274]	(0.00318)	(0.00368)	[N = 2,098]	(0.00384)	[N = 1,246]	(0.00142)
Municipality							
Candidacy, $t+k$	0.024	0.0182	0.0143	0.016	0.0146	0.006	0.0145
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00301)	(0.00338)	[N = 24,810]	(0.00393)	[N = 15,000]	(0.00546)
Election, $t+k$	0.007	0.00510	0.00325	0.016	0.00253	0.01	0.00066
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00165)	(0.00178)	[N = 24,788]	(0.00216)	[N = 20,192]	(0.00250)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning the highest office in the constituency: provincial governor for province, and municipal mayor for municipality regressions. The unit of observation is a candidate. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table F2
First Place Effect (for the Same Position).

	Second Place Mean (1)	Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
		Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Province							
Candidacy, $t+k$	0.53	−0.0543	−0.0691	0.035	−0.0372	0.017	−0.0674
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0257)	(0.0308)	[N = 2,352]	(0.0329)	[N = 1,588]	(0.0455)
Election, $t+k$	0.425	−0.0297	−0.0519	0.039	−0.0298	0.021	−0.0747
	[N = 3,274]	(0.0251)	(0.0291)	[N = 2,474]	(0.0318)	[N = 1,792]	(0.0408)
Municipality							
Candidacy, $t+k$	0.605	−0.0687	−0.0679	0.015	−0.0556	0.005	−0.0535
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00777)	(0.00850)	[N = 23,838]	(0.0106)	[N = 12,366]	(0.0161)
Election, $t+k$	0.505	−0.0448	−0.0505	0.019	−0.0494	0.007	−0.0401
	[N = 29,294]	(0.00768)	(0.00827)	[N = 25,896]	(0.00984)	[N = 16,246]	(0.0138)
Village							
Candidacy, $t+k$	0.625	−0.0552	−0.0507	0.026	−0.0452	0.011	−0.0501
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00326)	(0.00354)	[N = 135,228]	(0.00434)	[N = 91,976]	(0.00592)
Election, $t+k$	0.487	−0.0261	−0.0290	0.023	−0.0339	0.007	−0.0451
	[N = 160,192]	(0.00332)	(0.00361)	[N = 131,142]	(0.00458)	[N = 67,226]	(0.00752)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for or winning the same office again: provincial councilor for province, municipal councilor for municipality and village councilor for village regressions. The unit of observation is a candidate. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table G1
Voter Coordination.

	Full Sample		Optimal Bandwidth	
	Quadratic (1)	Cubic (2)	Linear (3)	Linear (4)
Province				
First	0.0418	0.0349	0.0395	−0.0456
	(0.0285)	(0.0311)	(0.0317)	(0.0528)
Voter Turnout	0.0123	0.00438	0.00201	−0.0233
	(0.0219)	(0.0294)	(0.0298)	(0.0538)
First × Voter Turnout	0.0309	0.0443	0.0314	0.0883
	(0.0408	(0.0464)	(0.0454)	(0.0833)
Second Place Mean	.042	.042	.042	.042
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT=.046	IK=.013

Table G1 (*continued*)

	Full Sample		Optimal Bandwidth	
	Quadratic (1)	Cubic (2)	Linear (3)	Linear (4)
N	1,604	1,604	1,284	662
Municipality				
First	0.0546	0.0361	0.0338	0.0251
	(0.0146)	(0.0180)	(0.0173)	(0.0233)
Voter Turnout	−0.0190	−0.0315	−0.0277	−0.0322
	(0.0131)	(0.0156)	(0.0154)	(0.0204)
First × Voter Turnout	−0.00101	0.0180	0.0255	0.0120
	(0.0215)	(0.0245)	(0.0266)	(0.0315)
Second Place Mean	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.121
Bandwidth	1	1	CCT = 0.014	IK = 0.006
N	12,830	12,830	10,742	6,984

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the probability of running for vice governor (vice mayor). The voter turnout variable is an indicator for above median voter turnout defined as the share of actual to registered voters. The unit of observation is a candidate. Columns 1–2 use the full sample with quadratic and cubic control functions. Column 3 uses the Calonico et al. (2014) selection method while column 4 uses the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) selection method. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table G2
Media Exposure.

		Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
	Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Province							
First	1.74	−0.507	0.303	0.029	−0.530	0.024	−1.216
	[N = 1,246]	(0.881)	(1.019)	[N = 796]	(0.947)	[N = 720]	(0.833)
Municipality							
First	1.04	0.0419	−0.151	0.006	−0.378	0.005	−0.241
	[N = 8,536]	(0.232)	(0.218)	[N = 4,646]	(0.238)	[N = 4,042]	(0.314)
Village							
First	0.162	−0.0081	−0.0059	0.018	0.0017	0.006	0.0110
	[N = 159,941]	(0.0135)	(0.0146)	[N = 138,199]	(0.0189)	[N = 75,221]	(0.0312)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the number of news articles where the candidate was mentioned. The unit of observation is a candidate. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

Table G3
Access to Resources.

		Full Sample		Bandwidth: CCT		Bandwidth: IK	
	Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Dependent Variable: Campaign Contributions by Party							
First	11.46	−25.37	−4.470	0.032	−15.26	0.031	−15.26
	[N = 373]	(17.37)	(12.48)	[N = 241]	(10.30)	[N = 241]	(10.30)
Dependent Variable: Total Campaign Contributions							
First	22.07	−27.96	−16.34	0.031	−18.95	0.053	−8.475
	[N = 373]	(16.77)	(16.15)	[N = 237]	(12.08)	[N = 300]	(12.79)
Dependent Variable: Personal Campaign Expenditure							
First	155.97	−5.233	5.477	0.032	47.80	0.036	22.24
	[N = 373]	(22.98)	(25.01)	[N = 243]	(27.35)	[N = 251]	(43.15)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the province level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the amount received by candidates from their party, from all sources, and the amount spent originating from personal sources. Amounts are expressed in thousands of Philippines pesos. The unit of observation is a candidate. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

A mechanism closely related to both party alignment and voter coordination is media exposure—first placers might enjoy more extensive media mileage, rallying parties or voters to converge towards the first placer because of this boost in popularity. We test this by collating all online articles from 29 top national and regional news outlets in the Philippines from 2008 to 2019 and use the number of times a councilor's name appears in the articles as our main outcome variable. Table G2 shows that first and second placers do not differ in the number of times they are mentioned in local media during their terms. In addition, the low number of name

Table G4
Council Positions & Performance.

| | Full Sample | | | Bandwidth: CCT | | Bandwidth: IK | |
| | | | | | | | |
Second Place Mean (1)	Quadratic (2)	Cubic (3)	Optimal Value (4)	Linear (5)	Optimal Value (6)	Linear (7)
Dependent Variable: Number of Committee Chairmanships						
First	2.25	−0.0271	−0.0757	0.010	0.0289	0.007	−0.240
	[N = 121]	(0.163)	(0.184)	[N = 83]	(0.194)	[N = 73]	(0.229)
Dependent Variable: Number of Ordinances Sponsored						
First	7.31	−0.353	−1.728	0.009	−1.740	0.005	−1.475
	[N = 308]	(1.185)	(1.364)	[N = 202]	(1.259)	[N = 156]	(1.422)

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. Dependent variable is the number of committee chairmanships held or the number of ordinances sponsored. The unit of observation is a candidate. The number of observations for the full sample and bandwidth methods is reported in brackets. Second place mean is the estimated value of the dependent variable for the second placer using the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) method.

mentions regardless of rank shows that councilors do not seem to be the focus of media attention.

We also explore a politician-level mechanism which measures the councilor's performance in office. Councilors who end up achieving a higher rank may update their beliefs and desires for political promotion. As a result, they perform better and exert more effort towards running for higher office. To test this, we collated ordinances from various municipalities and linked them to each councilor. In Table G4, we find that first placers do not sponsor more ordinances than second placers, thus providing suggestive evidence that effort and performance are not a mechanism driving the first place effect.[18]

While we have argued that councilors regardless of rank have constitutionally similar roles, differences may arise between what is legally recognized (*de jure*) and what is practiced in reality (*de facto*). First, a potential hypothesis is that first placers have amassed more wealth or have better access to resources (regardless of source) due to their position. While this variable is hard to capture, we use data from campaign filings on personal or other sources of campaign funds to measure wealth and access to resources. In Table G3, we find that total contributions and personal campaign expenditures in the subsequent election for first and second placers are not significantly different. Second, an important concern is that informal norms surrounding political appointments may dictate that better positions be reserved for the higher ranked candidate. To test this, we collect data on committee chairmanships in different municipal councils and show in Table G4 that first placers are not more likely to become committee chairs.

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[18] To shed more light on this and the following mechanisms, we hand-collected these novel datasets. Given the difficulty in data availability, the tests conducted using these datasets have smaller samples and the resulting estimates suffer from larger standard errors.