INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE OF UK MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT 1959 -2010

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Abstract

This thesis provides original quantitative research on MPs' incumbency advantage in Great Britain from 1959 – 2010. It has been widely agreed since the 1970s that MPs benefit from a small but significant personal vote, such that when they retire, their party receives a penalty in their constituency as a newcomer fights the seat. Much of the empirical work done on incumbency, discussed in the literature review, has been done using individual level data, i.e. asking voters questions about who they vote for and why they do so. This study is based entirely on macro-level data, that of election results. The author felt that whilst voters could provide ex-post facto rationalization or even lies to survey takers about their reasons for voting, election vote counts do not lie. The study adapts two methods of measuring incumbency popular in the US, "slurge" and the "Gelman King Index" for work on Congress, for use in the UK setting.

The thesis is structured with Chapter 1 providing some real life examples of incumbency advantage looking through MPs careers. As well as providing some original qualitative research on incumbency, it also explains some of the challenges and pitfalls of using macro level data to measure incumbency advantage. The literature review is divided into two chapters. Chapter 2 looks at the history of research into incumbency advantage and explores how methodologies have changed. Chapter 3 looks thematically through the differing sources from which academics believe incumbency advantage comes. Chapter 4 presents some original quantitative research on the change in the operation of the UK electoral system over the study period. Chapter 5 presents the methods and data, Chapter 6 the results and Chapter 7 the conclusions and implications.

The key findings of the thesis are:

- Incumbency advantage is significant and positive for the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and the two nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland and has been so for the whole of the study period
- There is a considerable difference amongst the parties, in the 1983 – 2010 period, Conservative incumbency advantage was worth just under 1% of the vote, Labour's was 2% of the vote, whilst the Liberals and Nationalists enjoyed an incumbency advantage of 4 – 8% of the vote
- There has been an increase over time in incumbency advantage over the study with major party incumbency advantage increasing from under 0.5% of the vote in the early period to 1.5-2.5% in the most recent elections.
- There is tentative evidence that incumbency advantage is larger for the major parties in areas where they have fewer MPs.
- That incumbency advantage has been important enough to change the results of as many as 10 to 15 seats in recent elections. Without incumbency effects, the Conservatives would have been likely to have won an extra 13 seats at the 2010 election, giving them a realistic option to govern as a minority if they had not wanted to come to an agreement with the Liberal Democrats.

- The study finds no material evidence that the decline in partisanship amongst voters is responsible for the increase in incumbency advantage.
- Whilst many US authors believe that House incumbency advantage is inversely correlated with the polarization of the two parties, the study found no evidence of this in the UK setting.
- Tests on controversial roll-call votes such as the Iraq War show no evidence that it makes a material difference to an MP's electoral performance in a subsequent election. The results suggest that the electorate does not know or care (enough) about how their MP voted even in the most critical divisions for it to make a difference to whether they vote for them or not.
- Whilst the thesis does not come to a firm conclusion about the source of incumbency advantage, it finds strong circumstantial evidence that the main source is name recognition. This comes from the results of tests on non-incumbent repeat candidates. Amongst Conservatives, there was no significant difference between incumbency advantage and the bonus received by non-incumbent repeat candidates.

The study period for this thesis was 2010 – 2018 on a part time basis. For all but a few months of the study period, the candidate was in full time employment.

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Chapter 1 - Examples of incumbency and repeat candidacy:

Introduction:

This thesis is a largely quantitative work using aggregate level data to find answers to the questions of whether incumbency is significant, how much of an impact it makes on election results, and the extent to which it has changed over the period studied. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the subject by providing some real life examples of incumbency and repeat candidacy, demonstrating some of the effects in the real world. The chapter begins with a vanilla example showing life cycle of a specific MP's incumbency without the interference of material outside factors disguising the impact. As the chapter progresses the examples become more complex and are designed to illustrate the need to take other factors into account when attempting to measure incumbency from aggregate level data.

It will also show some of the factors that have to be taken into account when using aggregate data, for example, the chapter shows the case of demographic change over an extended period and how an apparently safe Labour seat at the 1959 election shifted to one that the Conservatives were able to pick up 11 years later in 1970, and the challenge of dealing with boundary reviews. It will look at some of the themes explored in the literature review (in the next two chapters), about the reasons for incumbency, such as constituency service or partisan positioning. Finally, it will explore atypical cases to show that the incumbency factor is not a uniform phenomenon, it will show that some MPs may have had enormous incumbency advantages whilst others may have had a negative incumbency advantage by upsetting constituents.

Data for the chapter comes from the dataset compiled by the author for the project as a whole. There is a lengthy explanation of the data sources in section 5.2 <below>.

1.1 Vanilla example: Paddy Tipping in Sherwood

The first example in this section was designed to show a vanilla experience of incumbency for a major party MP; i.e. the candidate experiencing a first term bounce and a retirement slump on his or her retirement. It was more difficult than expected to find such examples due to the many distortions that can occur. Table 1.1 <below> as well as charts 1.1 and 1.1a <below> show the results of the elections in Sherwood from 1987, the election before Tipping was elected until 2010, the election at which he stood down. The electoral battle in Sherwood at each election was a straightforward two party fight between Labour and the Conservatives at each election, with the Liberal Democrats in a distant third position, and there was no minor party or independent activity of any note. There was no material boundary change between the 1992 and 1997 elections, and the one in 2005 was relatively minor, with the Labour lead over Conservative estimated to have increased by under 2%. There is also no evidence of unusual demographic change or any similar such idiosyncrasies.

This example is also illustrated by two charts which show the electoral history, chart 1.1 shows the Conservative lead over Labour in absolute terms, and the second chart, 1.1a, shows the difference in the Conservative lead over Labour compared with that in the region of the East Midlands such that the zero point on the y-axis is the regional mean at each election. The purpose of this is to show how Tipping's majority over the Conservatives evolved in absolute terms, but also in relative terms once the regional swing has been stripped out. This better visualizes the slump/surge effect on an MP's career life cycle.

At the 1987 election, Sherwood returned the Conservative MP Andy Stewart who was re-standing for the first time. As chart 1.1 shows, the Conservative majority over Labour was nearly 8% (Labour majority of minus 8%), as Stewart defeated the Labour candidate William Bach comfortably. As chart 1.1a shows, the result relative to the regional average was that the constituency was actually 11% more Labour than the East Midlands, and it was over 4% more Labour than the national average. Indeed, during the whole period 1992 – 2010, Sherwood was always more Labour than the regional and indeed national average, but not necessarily enough so that the party would win it every time. At the 1987 election the Conservative lead over Labour nationally was close to 12% and it was 18.6% in the East Midlands, which meant that the degree to which the seat leaned towards Labour wasn't anywhere near enough to prevent the Conservatives winning.

At the 1992 election, there was a swing to Labour nationally with the party increasing its vote share by 4.7%, whilst the Conservative vote shared dropped by 0.5%. In the East Midlands, there was a much larger swing to Labour with their vote rising over 7%, whilst the Conservative vote dropped 2%. Paddy Tipping, who had previously fought the constituency of Rushcliffe, the southern end of the same county, in the 1987 election, fought Sherwood for the first time, and was able to knock out the incumbent Conservative with a majority of 4.6%. In the two charts, the red centre indicates a Labour victory, whilst the blue outer-rim indicates that there was an incumbent candidate standing and that at this election was a Conservative. Chart 1.1a shows that Tipping did slightly better than the regional average, (and this was also the case relative to the national average), with the Labour result in Sherwood 13.8% better than the regional average up from 11%.

Between 1992 and 1997, Tipping served as a Labour backbencher and was seen as a left-winger, having voted for Margaret Beckett in the 1994 Labour leadership race (Waller and Criddle, 1999), but was not a high profile MP nationally. At the 1997 election, having had five years to build up a profile locally Tipping's majority shot up from 4% to just under 30%. The markers for the 1997 election show red for the Labour victory, and indeed a light red outer-rim indicating that there was an incumbent standing, and that the incumbent was Labour. The election of 1997 was of course Labour's best ever, with a majority of 179 and double-digit leads in vote share over the Conservatives both nationally and the East Midlands. This needs to be accounted for to assess if indeed Tipping did receive a first term surge. Chart 1.1a shows that Tipping's result was better than the regional average, the majority in Sherwood rose 3%

more than regional average. This would be around the amount one would expect if the own party incumbency advantage was in the order of 1.5%.[1]

Between 1997 and 2010 Tipping served as a Government MP, whose Ministerial career is described as one that did "not quite ignite" by Waller and Criddle (2007), although Tipping did serve as a Parliamentary Private Secretary "PPS" during two sessions. As chart 1.1 shows, between 1997 and 2005, the overall result in Sherwood moved in the same direction as the result nationally and regionally, with the Labour ahead, but with the majority falling, Tipping's majority more than halved to 14.1% of the vote in 2005, relative to 1997. As chart 1.1a shows, there was a worse result in 2001 than there was regionally with the seat slipping back in relative terms, but then the result in 2005 mirrored the regional swing.[2]

Between the 2005 and 2010 election, the Boundary Commission presented its 5th periodic review and made changes to constituencies in Nottinghamshire. The effect of these is estimated to have made Sherwood slightly more favourable towards Labour with the estimated majority under the new boundaries on the 2005 vote expected to have been 16%, up from 14.1%. The grey dot at the 2005 election illustrates this estimate of the notional so it can be visualized against the actual result.[3] The other change to the constituency during this Parliament was the retirement of Tipping himself following a heart attack in 2009. At the 2010 election the seat was lost to the Conservatives and it is very possible that it was the retirement of Tipping that proved decisive.

As chart 1.1 shows, at the 2010 election the Conservatives won the seat of Sherwood by 0.4%, or 214 votes, the 15th closest result of that election. There was a big swing to Conservatives both nationally and in the East Midlands, with the party gaining net of 97 seats[4] including Sherwood. The charts show a blue marker for the Conservative victory, but there is no outer-border since the incumbent stood down. Chart 1.1a shows why Tipping's retirement may have cost Labour the seat. The change in Sherwood was worse for Labour than that regionally, with the relative lean of the seat to Labour falling 3.1% (+14.1% to +11%). This underperformance in 2010 almost exactly reversed the outperformance of 1997 when Tipping's majority increased 3% more than the regional average. The results beg the question as to what might have happened had Tipping restood, it might well have been the case that Labour would have held on to this constituency.

This example on its own does not attempt to try to prove the existence or importance of incumbency, but provides a template of what the life cycle of a member could look like in terms of support, and may provide a real example of when it could have been critical.

1.2*. Incumbency different parties in the same constituency, Sir John Hannam and Ben Bradshaw in Exeter*

The constituency of Exeter provides two examples of the incumbency factor at work, one for a Conservative and one for Labour and offers the possibility that

the incumbency factor may have been decisive in preventing the seat from changing parties in October 1974 and 2010. In the 12 elections from 1964 – 2010, the constituency of Exeter was a relatively marginal seat with the Labour and Conservative parties within 20% of the vote of one another in all but three of these elections, and within 10% at six of them. Table 1.2 shows the results of the Exeter constituency in terms of percentage of the vote with the winning candidate's total highlighted. Table 1.2 shows the results from 1966, until 2010 and shows the complete career of Sir John Hannam, and the career to 2015 of the current incumbent Ben Bradshaw. Table 1.2a shows the relative results in Exeter, this time against the national average.[5] Looking over the whole period, one can see that Exeter has at times been more Conservative than the national average and at other times more Labour than the national average.

The constituency had been Conservative from the end of the First World War until 1966 when Labour's Gwyneth Dunwoody won it, the first time Labour had done so, she was able to beat the incumbent Conservative MP Dudley Williams. At the 1970 election the seat was a top target for the Conservatives and they selected John Hannam who was described in the election programme of 1970 as a Motorway Services Manager (BBC, 1970). Hannam took the seat from Dunwoody with a slightly above average swing than the national average. As the second chart, 1.2a shows, Exeter moved from being slightly more favourable to Labour than the national average, to slightly more favourable to the Conservatives than the national average.

Between 1970 and Feb 1974 the Boundary Commission for England & Wales finalized its second periodic review and there was a major redistribution of seats in Devon, which meant material changes to the make up of the Exeter constituency. The grey circle on the two charts shows the estimated 1970 result on the new boundaries and indicates that the seat moved towards the Conservatives, albeit still pretty narrowly. Despite a small swing to Labour at the Feb 1974 election, Hannam appears to have had a first term incumbency surge with his majority actually increasing in absolute terms to close to 10%. When the second chart, which shows the relative result, is viewed, it shows the achievement in greater clarity as it shows the Exeter constituency moving into Conservative territory compared with the national average. At the October 1974 election the result was close to the national average with Hannam's majority falling in line with the national total, but had he not had such the first time surge at the February election, the seat would likely have been lost on the October swing to Labour.

For much of the rest of Hannam's career up until the 1992 election, the seat behaved very much in line with the national average and as the charts show, despite a lead over Labour of over 20% of the vote in 1983 and 1987 (with the Alliance in second place), the relative majority compared with the national average remained extremely static. As the charts show, at his final election in 1992, there was a sharp slump in both the absolute and relative performance of the Conservatives over Labour in the seat, as the latter achieved an over 10% increase in their share of the vote as the Liberal Democrat vote fell away from the Alliance's high 1987 total. The most likely reason for this was that the

relative position of the Conservatives had been weakening over time from 48.4% in 1979, 44.4% in 1987, to 41.1% in 1992. However, due to Alliance intervention, the Labour party failed to benefit from this until 1992. As the second chart shows, although Hannam held on, the performance of the seat was worse for the Conservatives versus Labour than the national average for the first time since the 1966 election.

At the 1997 election, Hannam retired after 27 years service, which meant for the first time since 1951 there was no incumbent standing. The Conservatives selected Dr Adrian Rodgers, whose campaign against his Labour opponent, a new candidate and former BBC journalist Ben Bradshaw was criticized as homophobic (BBC, 1997). The 1997 result in Exeter was appalling for the Conservatives with Bradshaw winning by almost 20% of the vote, and the relative position of the seat moved further into Labour territory, although the move was less than it had been between 1992 and 1997 which does not suggest there was an especially large retirement slump in the Conservative vote due to Hannam's departure.

Ben Bradshaw managed to increase his majority in 2001 to over 20% of the vote, making Exeter a pretty secure seat for Labour. The result for Labour is even better when compared to the national average, which was a small swing back to the Conservatives. As the chart showing the relative performance in Exeter shows, there was a further sharp move into Labour territory with the party's relative performance in the constituency nearly 15% better than the national average. This result, like that of Feb 1974, suggests the incumbent MP may well have benefited from a first time surge, outperforming his party's national result. The 2005 election showed a decline in Bradshaw's majority from 22% to just under 14%, but in relative terms, this was only a relatively small swing back away from the Labour, with the seat remaining firmly in Labour territory.

Between the 2005 and 2010 elections, there was a boundary change, which had a material change in the partisan makeup of Exeter with a more rural Conservative portion of the Exeter borough being moved into the East Devon constituency. As the notionals in the table show, the 2005 result is estimated to have been a 17.2% Labour majority on the new boundaries. In 2010 Labour held on to Exeter, a seat the Conservatives had in 1992 when their lead in votes over Labour nationally was roughly the same as it was in 2010. The question therefore is, was Bradshaw's incumbency responsible for this reversal of fortune, it could it be put down to demographic change and boundary changes? [6]

1.3 Liberal Democrat Incumbent (1) – Paddy Ashdown in Yeovil

Jeremy John Durham "Paddy" Ashdown is a good example of a successful repeat candidate, having won a seat as a challenger on the second attempt. John Peyton, who served in Mrs Thatcher's first Cabinet, since 1951, had held the constituency of Yeovil. Peyton had always faced a two-way Labour and Liberal challenges and had never polled more than half the vote, although winning by more than 10% in all elections with the exception of 1964 and 1966 when the majority fell to 9% and 4% respectively, over Labour. Ashdown was selected to fight the

constituency ahead of the 1979 election, replacing Col. Geoffrey Taylor, who had fought the seat five times, three times in a row 1955-1964, and then the two 1974 elections. At the second 1974 election Taylor's vote was 32 behind the Labour candidate giving the appearance of a tie at 29.0% of the vote.

Despite the replacement of the perennial candidate Taylor, and against the backdrop of an extremely weak Liberal performance nationally with their vote dropping 4.7% in Great Britain, Ashdown did unusually well, managing to increase the vote slightly and pushing Labour into third place. Ahead of the 1983 election, there were two changes, the retirement of Peyton, and the boundary reorganization. The result of the 1972 Local Government Act that split off Avon from northern Somerset, meant major boundary changes for the rump of the county and the creation of an additional seat of Somerton and Frome; Yeovil lost 20,000 voters. Despite these changes, the apparent partisan make-up of the seat did not materially change. However, it has been suggested the changes did allow the Liberal win the seat in 1983 because they were more able to increase their vote from the 1979 totals, in the semi industrial areas around Yeovil rather than the rural areas that were lost to Somerton and Frome (Waller, 1987).

Ashdown certainly managed to take advantage of the retirement of Peyton as well as the apparently favourable changes, increasing the Liberal share of the vote to 50.5%, an increase of exactly 20%. The Conservative vote dropped 3.8%, but most of the new Liberal votes came from Labour, whose share collapsed to only 5.6%, a lost deposit at that election.[7] Ashdown's victory came against a backdrop of the Liberal/SPD alliance increasing their vote 11.9% nationally, and by 10.8% in the South West region, so it is definitely fair to say that Ashdown's result was a significant outperformance. The question comes to mind as to whether Ashdown's vigorous repeat candidacy at the same time as the Conservative incumbent retiring could have been responsible for this. Whilst the Liberals had had a repeat candidate before in the constituency, he had almost always been challenging from a distant third place, and appeared more of a sacrificial lamb than ambitious candidate.

At the 1987 election, Ashdown's majority increased from 6.5% to 10.1%, but most of this was due to a fall in the Conservative vote, whilst the Liberal vote rose only 0.9%, not much of a first time surge by Liberal standards at all, and the vote did not increase much further in 1992, (0.3%), when Ashdown fought the constituency with all the extra publicity as leader of the of the Liberal Democrats. One might well be tempted to ask the question if Ashdown took his sophomore surge as the repeat candidate challenger in 1983 and thus there wasn't as much incumbency advantage to be gained at subsequent elections. Ashdown's final election in 1997 saw his vote fall 3%, not unsurprising given the fact that the Liberal Democrat vote fell to the benefit of Labour, except close Conservative-Liberal Democrat seats where voters chose to vote tactically to oust the Conservatives.

1.4 Liberal Democrat Incumbent – David Laws in Yeovil

David Laws' experience in Yeovil is a good example of the slump-surge experience that it is typical in Liberal Democrat seats. Liberal / Liberal Democrat incumbency advantage is much larger than that of the other two major parties and it has needed to be, given the electoral system's tendency to disadvantage the third party in terms of seats won against votes nationally (Curtice et al., 2010). Laws took over from the former Liberal Democrat leader who stood down at the 2001 election. He had not fought an election before, having acted as a senior Liberal Democrat policy advisor (Waller and Criddle, 2007). As tables 1.3/4 and 1.3/4a show, the 2001 results on the face of it, would have appeared to have been a disappointment for the Liberal Democrats, with their vote slumping 4.5% against a national increase of 1.6%, and a decline of 0.1% in the South West region. The seat also became very much less safe with the Conservative vote surging 8.3%, and majority falling from 21% to 8.2%. The slump in the Lib Dem vote could be put down to the retirement of Ashdown and replacement by Laws, and the size of the slump, of around 4.5 to 6% of the vote, depending on the comparison is very typical of what other authors have found the third party experiences (Gaines, 1998) (Curtice et al., 2010).

Had the Conservatives thought that Yeovil was going to be an easy target at the 2005 election, they would have been disappointed. The four years between the 2001 and 2005 election had allowed Laws to build up his own such incumbency advantage and the results can be seen in the table. Laws' vote rose 7.2% to 51.4%, close to the best level that Ashdown had achieved in 1992 as leader. The 2005 election was a good election for the Liberal Democrats nationally, with a vote increasing 3.8%, and 1.4% in the South West region. Laws obviously outperformed both of these and again, depending on the comparison, the size of Laws' first time surge could be seen at 3.4 to nearly 6%. It is also worth noting that Laws' managed to increase his vote mainly by squeezing the Labour vote, which dropped 4.2%, but also from the Conservatives and the other parties whose total percentages of the vote both dropped as well. Laws did even better in the 2010, with another vote increase of over 4%, again at the expense of Labour whose vote virtually halved. The explanation for this second improvement may have been an increase in tactical voting for Laws by Labour minded voters against the Conservatives, who were less inclined to support their usual first choice due to the unpopularity of the Brown Government. In any case, Laws' experience is a very good example of the Lib Dem slump-surge, which has a very much larger trough and peak than that seen by the two larger parties.

1.5 High profile – but very typical example: Mrs Thatcher's career in the [then] safe seat of Finchley.

Table 1.5 shows the results in Finchley from 1955 to 1992, the elections one before and immediately after Mrs Thatcher stood as the Conservative candidate. The final right hand side column of Table 1.5 also shows the Conservative share of the vote in London on unchanged boundaries.[8] At the 1955 election in Finchley, the incumbent Sir John Crowder beat Labour by over 23% of the vote, with the Liberals in a distant third place on 14%. Mrs Thatcher's first attempt at

office actually gave her largest ever majority in terms of both percentage and absolute numbers of votes, but this demonstrates some of the problems with assessing the performance of candidates and MPs. If one looks at in terms of margin or Conservative versus Labour swing in isolation alone, it would appear that the replacement of Crowder with Thatcher had had a positive impact. Thatcher's majority increased to 29.3%, a swing of over 3%. Butler (1955)'s statistical appendix <below> used this approach to measure test for the effects of retirement, and whilst it might have worked in cases where the Liberals did not stand in both elections, it clearly has flaws in ones where they did. Looking at the figures in more detail shows that the reason for the increase in the majority was a big rise in Liberal support that came disproportionately from the Labour party. Thatcher's own vote fell 1% from Crowder's 1955 total a worse result than the estimates for the London area where the Conservative vote was unchanged.

The 1964 election saw an unusually strong Liberal challenge in terms of efforts and resources specifically in the Finchley constituency. The party had done well in the final election to Finchley Municipal Borough held in 1963 before it was subsumed into the new London borough of Barnet in 1965, winning a majority of the seats. The Parliamentary contest led the Liberals to send a high profile candidate, John Pardoe, who was later elected in North Cornwall. The three-way fight for Finchley attracted the attention of David Butler, who profiled the constituency and the contest in the Nuffield study of 1964 (Butler and King, 1965). Despite the high profile nature of the contest, the Conservative vote dropped only 7%, only 1% worse than the national result, with the Liberals picking up, net, all of that and just under 1% at the expense of Labour as well. That said, the Liberal challenge was a failure, with Mrs Thatcher winning by 16%. At the 1966 election, Mrs Thatcher's vote shared barely moved whilst Labour snatched back second place as the Liberal challenge faded slightly, she benefited from split opposition to maintain a majority of 18% over Labour in an election in which Labour won by a landslide. The 1970 election was also uneventful in Finchley with the Conservative vote rising broadly 7%, in line with national and London trends, although Labour's vote also rose against the trend as the unwind of the Liberal challenge from 1964 continued.

The effects of the creation of the London Borough of Barnet were felt in the boundary changes, which came in for the February 1974 election. The previous Finchley constituency was based on the eponymous municipal borough as well as the Friern Barnet urban district. This constituency was oversized relative to the other three constituencies which were to make up the four allocated to the new borough of Barnet, and so Finchley lost some of its safest Conservative areas in Whetstone to Chipping Barnet, and the Bishops Avenue area to Hendon South, whilst the electorate dropped from 72,000 to 60,000. Table 1.5 shows the estimated 1970 election results on the new boundaries, showing that it was estimated to have become 1.5% more Labour. The other change at the February 1974 election as compared to 1970 was that Mrs Thatcher was by then a well-known member of the Government having served as Secretary of State for Education for the whole of the course of the Heath Government. She had attracted controversy for the withdrawal of subsidy for free school milk and also

partially overturned the previous Government's policy that all local authorities would be obliged to end the 11-plus and adopt comprehensive schools. Her result in February 1974 was the worst of her career thus far, with a drop of 8.5% from the 1970 notionals, but once again benefited from a divided opposition, to win by nearly 15% over Labour who also suffered a vote drop from the 1970 notionals.

At the October 1974 election Mrs Thatcher's profile increased even more from that of February. As Shadow Environment Secretary, she led for the party on housing issues and the pledge she championed of reducing the mortgage rate down to 9.5% by the end of the year if the Conservatives were elected, was widely credited with having saved the party a number of seats in London and the South of England (Butler and Kavanagh, 1975). Thatcher's own result in Finchley, an increase of 0.3% of the vote, was better than the national trend a fall of 2.1%, but in fact not dissimilar to other three seats in Barnet (-0.7, +1.8, +2.2%), and indeed the London result of a fall of just 0.2%. At the 1979 election, Mrs Thatcher's elevation to party leader and favourite to Prime Minister also does not appear to have had a huge impact on her personal majority in Finchley. As Table 1.5 shows her vote share increased 8.5%, whilst Labour's vote also recovered slightly. Despite the additional exposure her result was very much in line with the other three Barnet results (+6.1, +7.6, +9.8%), and in fact, one tenth lower than the party's mean increase in Greater London suggesting that was not a lot of benefit from contesting the election as leader of the party.

The results in the 1983 and 1987 elections in Finchley were also pretty much in line with local trends despite the candidate leading her party to two landslide victories in these elections. The Conservative vote did actually drop nationally in both, but the party did well in London in 1987, as the table shows it rose 2.6%. Mrs Thatcher's vote rose 2.9% in Finchley, perhaps helped by the fact that three borough's neighbouring Barnet that were controlled by Labour, Islington, Harringey and Brent had attracted fierce tabloid attacks for having so-called loony left leaders, Merle Amory, Bernie Grant and Margaret Hodge respectively, along with perceived extremism with the London Labour party in general (Curran et al., 2005). After losing office in 1990, Mrs Thatcher stood down as the MP for Finchley ahead of the 1992 election, and was replaced by a then unknown candidate, Hartley Booth. Despite a losing a 33-year incumbent who had fought the previous election as Prime Minister, the Conservatives appear to have suffered only a relatively small penalty. The vote share in Finchley dropped 2.7%, which was the worst of the four results in Barnet (-0.9, -2.4, +3.2%), and also worse than the London average of -1.2%, but not the kind of knock the Liberal Democrats took in Yeovil on Paddy Ashdown's retirement.

Other than the 1964 election, which featured a high profile three-way fight for the constituency, Mrs Thatcher's career in Finchley is very typical of that of an incumbent major party MP in a safe or relatively safe seat. The results fluctuate slightly, but the general trend is in line with London results and those of the rest of the borough of Barnet, which returned four Conservatives MPs with similar shares of the vote from the constituency reorganization prior to 1974 until the 1997 election. The key point from this detailed examination of Mrs Thatcher's

electoral record is that there appears to be little evidence that in this case, having a high profile incumbent made any material difference to the party's performance in the seat. It is reasonable to assume that there was a retirement penalty when Mrs Thatcher left in 1992, but perhaps not more than 1 to 1.5% of the vote.

1.6 Repeat candidacy (1) – Liberal Democrat Lynne Featherstone increases her party's vote from under 10% to over 45% and wins the seat on her third attempt.

An example of a successful Liberal Democrat repeat candidate was that of Lynne Featherstone in Hornsey and Wood Green and this is shown in table 1.6. Labour had gained the seat from the Conservatives after the retirement of the incumbent Sir Hugh Rossi in 1992, and the two party battle for the marginal constituency pushed the Liberal Democrat vote to less than 10% of the vote. At the 1997 election, the first term incumbent Barbara Roche increased her vote to above 60%, whilst the then Harringey councillor Featherstone at her first attempt managed to gain just 11.3% of the vote, still over 10% behind the Conservatives. Featherstone was able to increase her profile by becoming a member of the London Assembly since 2000, and was supported locally by Lib Dem gains on Harringey council in 1998, concentrated in the Hornsey half of the borough (Waller and Criddle, 2007). At the second attempt Featherstone managed to increase the vote by 14% and supplanting the Conservatives as the challengers for the constituency. At Featherstone's third attempt, the unpopularity of Labour in North London due to the Iraq War (Curtice et al., 2005), helped to facilitate a large upset win where Featherstone managed to push the Labour incumbent out. Featherstone managed to increase her vote share for the fourth time as a first term incumbent in 2010, the Labour vote slumped further as any personal vote Barbara Roche may have had rolled off. [9]

1.7 Repeat candidacy (2) Fourth time lucky in Peterborough, Michael Ward defeats a long-standing incumbent after two near misses.

Table 1.7 <below> shows an extremely unusual case where a repeat candidate won election on his fourth attempt. The table shows the majority in terms of absolute numbers of votes because this case has the added interest of having had two extremely small majorities, 22 votes in Feb 1974 and just three votes in 1966. Ward was selected to fight the seat of Peterborough, which had been held by the Conservative, Sir Harmar Nicholls, ahead of the 1966 election. Nicholls had been re-elected in 1964 with a reduced majority of 5.1% of the vote, and so the seat was potentially winnable as Labour was expected to make gains when they sought to seek a better mandate in a second election. The swing of just over 2.5% was very marginally lower than the national average, which was fatal to Ward's hopes as he lost by the three vote margin mentioned, after seven recounts at the 1966 election (Waller, 1987, BBC, 1970).

Ward ended up contesting the seat another three times before winning and was unusual as a perennial candidate in that he was not a local candidate with a particular stake in the constituency, such as being the leader of the local borough council, unlike Stuart Mole, see <below>. In fact, whilst restanding for the seat in

1970 and the two 1974 elections, Ward in fact lived in North East London, was a member of Havering Council, and the leader of the authority from 1971 until he was elected to Parliament in the second October election (Williams, 2009). Ward's commitment to Peterborough was described as being so strong, that not only did he fight it four times before being elected, but also did he not seek to be selected anywhere else (Dalyell, 2009).

A confluence of two factors may have been responsible for Ward's victory in October 1974. Peterborough was designated a new town in 1968 which meant the addition of a large amount of new housing, and the movement of less well off voters from London. Additionally, the estimated changes of the boundary changes which took some of the more rural areas out of the constituency, was that the partisan make-up of the seat moved in Labour's direction. As table 1.7 shows Nicholls' 1970 majority is estimated to have been 4% smaller than the actual 8.2% it was, whilst the numerical majority reduced from over 4,500 votes to 1,900 as the oversized constituency saw its electorate cut substantially. Despite the boundary changes, Ward's third attempt was to see him lose by 22 votes in Feb 1974 as both Labour and Conservatives lost votes to the Liberal surge at that election. The October 1974 election saw Ward's persistence pay off, and whilst the Conservative vote share was up very slightly, Labour's rose just under 5%, giving Ward a majority of just under 4%. At the 1979 election, there was little evidence though that Ward gained any significant first time surge, or benefitted from the fact that his longtime opponent had become Lord Harmar-Nichols and so was no longer eligible to stand. The Conservative vote under the new candidate Brian Mawhinney, surged 8.1%, whilst Ward's dropped 4.6%, not dissimilar to the national and regional results. All in all, the record in this constituency looks like being more influenced by national trends, boundary changes, and demographic shifts more than by incumbency and repeat candidacy. However, given the tiny margin, especially in Feb 1974, one wonders whether a locally based repeat candidate might have made the 22-vote difference.

1.8 Repeat candidacy (3) Norman St. John-Stevas vs. Stuart Mole in Chelmsford – Close but unsuccessful repeat Liberal Democrat challenge.

The Chelmsford constituency saw a long running duel between the senior Conservative, Norman St. John-Stevas and Liberal, Stuart Mole. Table 1.8 shows the results in the Essex county town from 1959 to 1992. St John-Stevas inherited a very safe seat, which he held comfortably by over 8% of the vote even in Labour's landslide year of 1966. The Liberal vote was very small prior to 1970. During the 1960s, ahead of the Boundary Commission's second periodic review, the population in Chelmsford had increased with the electorate growing from 61,000 to 88,000 by 1970. Significant boundary changes in the second periodic review, prior to the February 1974 election created new seats in Essex and reduced the electorate in Chelmsford. Compared with the 1970 numbers, the electorate was reduced by 13,000, and the constituency centred more on the town itself. Table 1.8 shows the estimated 1970 notionals on the new boundary, showing that it reduced St-John-Stevas's majority over Labour by 2.4%.

In local elections in Chelmsford during the early 1970s, Liberals had made a major breakthrough taking control of the new authority created in 1973. Liberals made a major effort for the seat in 1974 and they selected a candidate in his mid 20s, Stuart Mole to challenge for the seat, who managed to gain 33% of the vote. St. John-Stevas, then outgoing Minister for the Arts held on to the constituency, and is seen on the 1974 BBC Election programme joking about his Liberal rival's youthfulness (BBC, 1974). Initially there was still a significant Labour vote of 24%, but Mole, who became Liberal leader of Chelmsford Council, was subsequently reselected each time, increased the Liberal Party's vote in October 1974 and then again in 1979 by squeezing the Labour Party's vote.

As the population growth in Essex continued in the 1970s, there needed to be another boundary change in order to correct the oversized electorate, which had grown to 85,000 by 1979. As the table shows, the seat was made even more marginal ahead of the 1983 by taking out 15,000 voters more Conservative rural areas, which meant that the Conservative share, based on the 1979 results, on the new boundaries was reduced from 49.6 to 47.5%. At the 1983 election St John-Stevas's majority was cut from 4.9% on the notionals, to just 0.6% of the vote against another challenge from Mole who was able to squeeze the Labour vote down to a low of 5.1%. Having left the Cabinet in 1981 and with little prospect of a return having fallen out with the Prime Minister, St John-Stevas retired at the 1987 Election becoming Lord St John of Fawsley. As Waller (1991), observes that at the 1987 election, St Stevas's incumbency appears to have counted for nothing, and perhaps even may have been a negative factor. Mole might well have expected to be easily able to gain the constituency at the 1987 election as St John-Stevas's supposed incumbency bonus rolled off. However, the new candidate Simon Burns managed to increase the Conservative vote by 4.3% to 51.9%, way above the average for the Eastern region, which saw the party's vote increase by 1.1%. Burns also polled over half the vote, something St John Stevas had never managed on either the 1974 or 83 boundaries, which leaves one wondering if the latter had actually had a negative effect on his party's performance. On the other hand, Mole does appear to have had a following of his own, since when he stood down as the Liberal candidate in 1992, having made five attempts, the Liberal Democrat vote plunged over 11%, much more than the regional average, that of a drop of 6.2%.

1.9 Does the ideology of the incumbent matter? (1) – Renee Short in Wolverhampton North East

Renee Short, who was the Labour MP for the constituency of Wolverhampton North East from 1964 – 1987, is an extremely useful example for the purposes of this chapter, providing anecdotal evidence of a personal incumbency advantage, whilst providing evidence against the assumption that championing an unpopular cause or taking a hard-line ideological view might damage the incumbent politically. Before standing in Wolverhampton South East, Short had been a councillor in the Rural District Council of Watford, as well as Hertfordshire County Council. She stood and lost in the safe Conservative seat of St Albans in 1955 and then the more marginal seat of Watford in 1959 (Langdon, 2003).

As table 1.9 shows, when she was selected to fight the Wolverhampton North East constituency ahead of the 1964 election, it was a safe seat with a Labour majority of over 10% of the vote in an election, 1959, in which the Conservatives had won a majority of 100 nationally. The 1964 election result might be seen as a disappointment as despite an over 4% swing nationally from the Conservatives, there was only a very small movement in the constituency of 0.9% of the vote in this two party battle. Wolverhampton North East was one of the first results declared and the very low swing, along with that seen in Billericay and Wolverhampton South West, confused commentators, including the BBC's David Butler and Robert McKenzie, who briefly thought it might mean the Conservatives would retain office (BBC, 1964). At the 1966 election, Short did much better than the national trend, increasing her vote by just under 6% of the vote at the expense of the Conservatives, more than double the 2.7% national swing to Labour from the Conservatives. Taking the 1964 and 1966 elections as a pair, it then looks like a good example for a slump and surge effect. This was a very much larger than the incumbency advantage of around 0.5% of the vote that David Butler estimated was normal in the Nuffield Study of that election (Butler and King, 1965).

At the 1970 and Feb 1974 elections, Short's result in Wolverhampton North East appears to have been distorted by the behaviour of her neighbour, Enoch Powell, in Wolverhampton South West <below>. All three seats in Wolverhampton,[10] saw some of the more extreme results of those elections. As chart 1.9 shows, both seats swung sharply in 1970 and 1974 in comparison to the national average. At the 1970 election, there was a huge swing to the Conservatives in Wolverhampton, which has been attributed to Enoch Powell's personal campaign. Short's opponent, ran on the slogan "a vote for Wright is a vote for Powell" (BBC, 1970), and Short saw her vote share decline 12% to just under half the vote. The table shows the estimates that the boundary changes made ahead of the February 1974 election.

At the February 1974 election, there was another example of how idiosyncratic factors beyond the candidate's control make a large effect on individual results and for which it is not always simple to account. Enoch Powell first resigned as the candidate, and then asked his supporters to vote for Labour in order to elect a Government promising referendum on the EEC. Once again, there was a huge swing, this time in the opposite direction in Wolverhampton North East, and although Short is seen on the BBC TV election coverage programme denying Powell had any impact (BBC, 1974), it is very likely that his intervention played a part in Short receiving an 11% swing in her favour (Butler, 1974).

Another issue that has to be controlled for in the 1959 – 1979 period is that prior to 1983, the Liberals did not stand in every constituency, and Wolverhampton North East was unusual in that there was no Liberal intervention until October 1974. The table shows there was a large "other vote", which in Feb 1974 was two different fringe extreme-right candidates, who may have been assisted in attracting protest votes by the lack of the Liberal option. The 1974 October result therefore is distorted by the fact that for the first time in Short's career there was a Liberal intervention, and her drop in vote share from 59.7 to 56.1%

should not be taken at face value. Instead, the relative performance of the two major parties, "Butler swing" (2.9%), or the change in the share of the two-party vote "Steed swing", is more appropriate, but even here, a Liberal intervention or withdrawal affects the other parties differently in different parts of the country, in different demographic groups and also in a differing manner at each election.

The boundary change made ahead of the 1983 election is estimated to have made a larger change in the partisan make-up of the Wolverhampton North East than its predecessor in the early 1970s. This time, it is estimated that the Labour vote would have been 1% lower at the 1979 election on the new boundaries, whilst the Conservative vote would have been 1.2% higher, such that at the 1983 election, Short was going into the election defending a majority of 10.4% instead of 12.6%. At the 1983 election, Short was lucky to have held on, with a majority of just 0.5% as Labour's vote collapsed across the country in reaction to the unpopular leadership of Michael Foot, the SDP-Liberal challenge, and the return of Mrs Thatcher with a landslide majority of 144. The margin of 0.5%, begs the question, that had Short not stood, would Labour have lost the seat? In fact, she had had a tough re-selection battle after fights with the Trotskyite left, and the prospect of another bitter re-selection battle led to her retirement in 1987.

The 1987 election shows another example of the retirement slump associated with incumbency advantage, and on this occasion it was enough to count, with Labour actually losing the seat for the first time since its creation in 1950. Whilst Labour's vote rose around 3% nationally, the same in Wolverhampton South West, and 4.5% in Wolverhampton South East, as the party recovered from the extreme low of 1983, the Labour vote rose by just 1.7% in Wolverhampton North East where it was needed most. Meanwhile, the Conservative vote, which was down 0.5% nationally, steady in the South West seat, and up 1% in the South East seat, surged 2.5% in North East, allowing the new Conservative candidate Maureen Hicks to win with a majority of 0.4%. The result suggests anecdotal evidence that there had been a small but significant number of Conservative minded voters who chose to support Short because they liked something about her, and that on her retirement reverted to type rather than support the new Labour candidate.

It is worth exploring the fact that Short's political opinions and stances appear not to have made any difference to this incumbency effect. There is an irony in her de-selection by the hard left, in that she was of the hard left herself, but as an old style pro-Soviet member, she was seen as an even greater heretic by the ideologically Trotskyite hard left which regarded the USSR as being run by ice-pick wielding state capitalists (Lilleker, 2004) (Howarth, 2003). Despite being mocked by Labour opponents and the media as being one of "Stalin's grannies" ,[11] (Donoughue, 2008), the data showing a first time surge in 1966 and retirement slump in 1987, suggests that voters who might otherwise have inclined towards the Conservatives, found something about her work as an MP attractive and were either ignorant of, or undeterred by her hard-line left wing views. Additionally, Short's advocacy of then extremely controversial and unpopular matter of abortion in 1965 appears to have made no material difference. Short piloted a Private Members Bill to give a qualified right to

abortion, which was filibustered but set the way for the Steel Bill of 1967 (Brooke, 2011). However, once again, there isn't the slightest bit of evidence that this advocacy did her any damage at the 1966 in which the sophomore surge observed was very much larger than was estimated by the Nuffield Studies in that period.

1.10 Does the ideology of the incumbent matter? (2) Enoch Powell in Wolverhampton SW

Despite his controversial career, this section will show that Enoch Powell had a huge personal support in his English constituency of Wolverhampton South West, which he represented from 1950 until his withdrawal at the first 1974 election.

Powell was selected ahead of the 1950 election for the new seat of Wolverhampton South West, which had been reorganized, but was largely a replacement for the Wolverhampton West constituency, which had been won by Labour's HD Hughes in 1945. Table 1.10 shows the results of the new constituency from 1950 up to and including the February 1974 election. The picture is slightly clouded by the irregular intervention and withdrawal of the Liberals who failed to stand from 1951 to 1959 and also at the 1966 election, therefore, to provide another check, the final column shows the share of the two-party vote won by the Conservatives.

Powell's victory in 1950 against the incumbent was extremely tight with a majority of 1.6% and a vote share of 46%, with a Liberal standing, the percentage of the two-party vote was 50.9%, a lead of 1.8%. At the 1951 election, Powell outperformed the party nationally with a nearly 3% swing against the Labour challenger. There is no doubt that Wolverhampton drifted towards the Conservatives in 1950s, in terms of the two-party swing, Wolverhampton NE saw an 11% swing between 1950 and 1959, whilst the swing in Bilston was 10%. Powell's performance was the best of the three though at 13%, more than three times the average national change in share of the two-party vote of 4.2%.

The 1964 election saw a Liberal intervention which on the face of it, appears to have damaged the Labour candidate more than Powell, although on a Butler swing measure there was a tiny swing to Labour of 0.7%, but in terms of the two-party vote was a swing to the Conservatives of 0.7%, a rare example of where Butler and Steed swings point in the opposite direction (see <below> for an explanation of the two methods). A better comparison and evidence of an extra outperformance by Powell is a direct comparison of the 1959 and 1966 election in the three Wolverhampton seats, all of which saw two-way contests in this pair of elections. Between these Powell had been promoted to the Cabinet in 1962 as Health Minister, resigned in 1963, refusing to serve under Sir Alec Douglas Hume, whose effective appointment by Harold Macmillan he regarded as illegitimate (Powell and Collings, 1992). In 1965, Powell had stood in the first ever leadership election for the Conservative Party leader, and whilst garnering just 13 votes, managed to earn himself a place in the shadow cabinet with the

post of Shadow Defence Secretary, where according to Blake (1997), it was thought he couldn't do too much harm. Powell's share of the vote dropped 4.8% between the 1959 and 1966 elections, compared with a drop of 6.8% in Wolverhampton North East and 3.4% in Bilston. In Great Britain the two-party swing between 1959 and 1966 was 6.3% away from the Conservatives.

Powell's final election in Wolverhampton South West saw yet another outperformance with his share of the two-party vote rising 11.3% to 70.3%. Despite a Liberal intervention, along with some independent candidates who described themselves as anti-racialist, Powell's share of the vote rose 5.2%, whilst Labour's fell 12.1%, a Butler swing of 8.6%. The BBC's results programme featured the psephologist Robert McKenzie having his swingometer repainted and extended to take in the extra-large swing in Wolverhampton (BBC, 1970). As has been said in the section on Wolverhampton North East, it appears Powell's campaigning had a big impact there, with a Steed swing of 9.6% in that seat, and Bilston where there was a Labour to Conservative swing of 6% in another two-way contest. Between the 1966 and 1970 elections, Powell had become a national figure after making an inflammatory speech on immigration in Birmingham in 1968, and been removed from the Shadow Cabinet (Bogdanor, 2013). After more speeches criticizing the leadership such as the Eastbourne conference speech of 1968, the party considered having him removed, but his perceived popularity in Wolverhampton was cited as a reason for preventing the party hierarchy taking this forward (Blake, 1997). Powell's campaign speech of 1970 attacking the left-wing establishment, which was dubbed the 'enemy within' speech, was widely thought to have aided the Conservatives at the election, and the high swing in the West Midlands is thought to have been due to Powell's popularity (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, 1971) (Bower, 2012).

Looking at the change from 1950 to 1970, Powell's majority over Labour of the two-party vote increased from 1.8 to 40.8%, a Steed Swing of 19.5%. As chart 1.10 shows, during Powell's time as the incumbent, the Wolverhampton SW seat had moved from just over 3% more Conservative than the national average to being nearly 20% more than the national average. On its own, this is insufficient as evidence to claim as incumbency advantage for Powell, the swing could have been caused by other factors such as demographic change. However, the very big reversal of this in one single election, the election in which Powell stands down, radically changes the balance of evidence.

Powell had voted against the European Communities Bill over 20 times in 1972 (Norton, 2011), and against the government on 115 occasions during the 1970-74 Parliament (Norton, 1978). Powell was a thorn in side of the Government on matters including, Northern Ireland, immigration and incomes policy, and his decision to stand down at the election and then encourage supporters to vote for Labour may have proven fatal for the Heath Government. Powell regarded the election as a fraud, and later justified his decision to stand down by saying that he couldn't possibly stand on a Conservative ticket when he opposed the centrepiece of the manifesto, which was the defence of prices and incomes policy against the miners strike (Powell and Collings, 1992). Powell certainly believed

he had caused the Government's defeat, saying "I put him in, and I got him out" (Bogdanor, 2013).

The result in the constituency was the most extreme move against the Conservatives in the country. Boundary changes had moved some of the most favourable parts of the Bilston seat into Wolverhampton South West and it is estimated that Powell would have won over 70% of the total vote and 75% of the two party vote had the new boundaries been in place at the time of the 1970 election. At the February 1974 election, the Conservative vote plunged 24.6%, by far the worst in any constituency in which the Liberals either stood in both elections or were not present in the two elections. In terms of the decline in Conservative share of the two-party vote it was by far the largest in the country, 16.3%, in any type of seat, and three of the next four were the neighbouring seats in Wolverhampton and Dudley with Steed swings to Labour of 10.5 to 11.5%.[12] Powell's outperformance building up support from his first attempt at re-election in 1951 and his last in 1970, and then the scale of the unwind of Conservative support at the February 1974 election suggests Powell not only enjoyed an incumbency advantage, but may have had an unusually large such advantage for a Conservative, possibly as much as 10% of the vote. As chart 1.10 shows Powell's successor, Nicholas Budgen, despite inheriting improved constituency boundaries, won with results much closer to the national average than Powell had done, and the results suggest it would have been extremely close in October 1974 under the old boundaries. This strongly suggests it was about Powell and not a demographic change or idiosyncrasy in Wolverhampton.

This leaves the question as to what it was that made Powell so popular with his constituents. Possibilities include notoriety and profile, he was one of the best known politicians in the country, or policy, his populist ideas on Europe and immigration were seen as vote winners and helpful for the Conservatives at the 1970 election. There is also evidence that Powell took his duties as a constituency representative extremely seriously in an age where some MPs were known to visit their constituencies as little as four times a year (Norton and Wood, 1993). Despite accusations of racialism, Powell was almost certainly the only member who was willing and able to speak to his Asian born constituents in Urdu at his surgeries. However, the most likely reason is that his constituents approved of his political views and statements however controversial they were nationally. This example contradicts the experience in the previous section where Renee Short's equally strong views appear to have made very little difference.

1.11 Negative incumbency? Lembit Opik in Montgomeryshire

The Welsh seat of Montgomery was one of most reliable seats for the party in the twentieth century, staying with them even the elections immediately after WW2 in which they were reduced to just six seats. Since the Montgomery county and borough constituency were merged in 1918, the constituency had only been lost by the Liberals at one election, that of 1979, and it returned to the fold in 1983 and represented by Alex Carlile until the 1997 election. Carlisle increased his

percentage share from 43% in 1983 to 48% in 1992, with a majority of over 15% over the Conservatives.

Table 1.11 shows the performance of Carlisle's successor Lembit Öpik. At the 1997 election, the Montgomery constituency was renamed Montgomeryshire, but was not affected by boundary changes. The Liberal Democrats selected Lembit Öpik, the son of two Estonian migrants who had been brought up in Northern Ireland (Waller and Criddle, 2007). At the 1997 there was a small drop of 2.5% in the Liberal Democrat vote as any incumbency advantage Carlile had rolled off. It is possible that the drop might have been larger had the Conservatives not been as unpopular as they were in 1997; Labour's vote rose 6% although remained in a distant third position.

Öpik's first two terms as MP for Montgomeryshire were not particularly controversial. He served as spokesperson for Northern Ireland matters from 1997 and additionally Wales from 2001. He took high profile positions on rural issues such as fox hunting and co-chaired a group of MPs who tried to produce a compromise position to avoid an outright ban on the sport. Öpik attracted some mockery for speaking out about the dangers of an asteroid strike on planet Earth, but there is no evidence this did any damage to him. At the 2001 election his vote share increased to 49.4% and then to 51.2% in 2005, giving him a majority of over 23% of the vote, larger than Alex Carlile had ever enjoyed.

During his third term, things started to go badly wrong for Lembit Öpik. He was mocked by fellow Liberal Democrats for jumping on bandwagons, just as they began to fail. His own candidacy for the Presidency of the party was lost, and his support for leader Charles Kennedy, and then candidate Mark Oaten appeared to come just as things went badly wrong for them. This phenomenon was derided as the 'curse of Lembit'. Öpik's personal life attracted tabloid interest as his relationship with the popular Welsh Television Presenter Sian Lloyd ended badly, and he started a new one with a 24-year-old pop singer from the 'Cheeky Girls', Gabriela Irimia (Watt, 2010). Öpik also attracted negative publicity from his expenses claims during the scandal of 2009. His claims for a total of over £100,000 for a London property which appeared to have been rented out to someone else attracted press attention, more so when it was revealed that for much of the time he claimed for the property, he had been living with Sian Lloyd elsewhere in London (Gysin and Kelly, 2009). An interview in which he said that he would fight the demands for him to repay some of the money was also described as 'political suicide' (Dale, 2009).

For the 2010 Election, there were no material boundary changes to the constituency and despite the Conservatives hoping to make gains from the Liberal Democrats as well as from Labour, the seat was not on any target list to receive additional resources and was ranked as the 210th on the list of seats the Conservatives could expect to pick up. The Conservative candidate, Glyn Davies, had contested it in 1997, and had been a list member for Mid Wales in the Welsh Assembly, but had not had an especially high profile. The result for Öpik was a disaster. A swing of 13% from the Liberal Democrats directly to the

Conservatives resulted in a shock defeat for the incumbent MP, the Conservative Party's least expected gain of the election.

There is a good reason to suspect that this result could be a rare example of negative incumbency. Not only did the apparent (positive) incumbency advantage which Öpik built up in 2001 and 2005, get wiped out, but it appears to have gone into reverse, with the incumbent's presence in the election actually weighing on his party's vote. The result was completely idiosyncratic and looks all the more extreme when compared to similar seats. Brecon and Radnorshire, the neighbouring, and more marginal Liberal Democrat seat, was held by its own incumbent, with a swing to the Conservatives of less than 1%. The only other seat in which the Liberal Democrats performed anywhere near as badly as this against the Conservatives, was Harrogate and Knaresborough where was a 9% swing. However, this was on the retirement of a three-term incumbent Phil Willis.

Whilst other high profile expenses scandal MPs were said to have been damaged electorally, the scale of Öpik's defeat stands out. Such examples appear to be unusual, because in many cases where an MP is affected by a scandal will choose not to re-stand, or will be de-selected by the local or national party. Another possible case for negative incumbency due to scandal is Jeremy Thorpe (Devon North in 1979), who fought and lost the election whilst facing murder charges. Negative incumbency due to the member's voting or political views appears to be even more unusual as demonstrated by the earlier section on Renee Short. However, it is said that Patrick Gordon Walker's high profile opposition to the immigration tightening in 1963 may have exacerbated a controversial campaign against him (Smethwick in 1964), whilst Humphrey Berkeley's advocacy decriminalizing homosexuality may have cost him his seat (Lancaster in 1966).

1.12 Shifting demographics defeating an incumbent – George Brown in Belper

George Brown was one of Labour's best known figures of the 1960s, having been a candidate for the leadership of his party in 1963 against Harold Wilson, and was elected as Labour's Deputy leader instead. He served as Deputy Prime Minister, acting as Minister for Economic Affairs from 1964 – 66 and then Foreign Secretary from 1966-68 when he resigned from office after a dispute with Wilson and the Chancellor about the devaluation of Sterling (Laybourn, 2001). Brown's unusually aggressive style and heavy drinking also added to his reputation. However, there is also some evidence that Brown used his influence to protect interests in the constituency. It was noted, for example, that he personally intervened to prevent the Beeching Review's recommendation that Belper station should be closed (Farmer).

Brown was adopted for the Belper constituency as a TGWU sponsored candidate for the 1945 election, winning with a majority of around 20% over his nearest opponent the Conservatives. Table and chart 1.12 show Brown's electoral history. Liberal participation was somewhat limited, with them only standing at the 1945, 1950 and 1964 elections. In order to strip this out and provide a comparison over the whole period, and extra column has been added showing

Brown's share of the two-party vote. The best result, both in terms of majority over the Conservatives and of share of the two party vote was that of 1945, although this is not comparable with the seat for the rest of the period as a large part of Southern Derbyshire was added into the seat for the 1950 election on boundaries which prevailed until 1974. At the 1950 election Brown enjoyed just under 59% of the two-party vote and but during the 1950s as the Conservatives gradually pulled ahead of Labour in seats in 1951, in votes and seats in 1955, and then to a 100 seat majority in 1959, Brown's share of the two-party vote dipped to 53.7% in 1959, a little over 7% over his Conservative opponent. The decline in Brown's vote in the 1950s does not look unusual in the national context where Labour's share of the two-party vote fell from 53.5% in 1950 to 47.0% in 1959.

Brown's position began to deteriorate in the 1960s, first relatively, in 1964 where the swing of just over 2% swing to Labour he received at the 1964 election was well below that enjoyed by the party nationally. Worse came at the 1966 where there was a swing of 2.5% to the Conservatives in Belper, whilst there was a swing of approximately the same amount, but in the other direction to Labour nationally. The consequence of this was that Brown's percentage majority over the Conservatives in 1966, a year when Labour had a majority of nearly a 100, was lower than it had been in 1959, a year the Conservatives had such a majority notionally. As chart 1.12 illustrates, the result in Belper at the 1966 election, for Labour, was worse than the national average for the first time since Brown had fought the seat, the result being 0.8% more Conservative than the national two-party average. Whilst this did not matter at the 1966 election at which Labour had a big lead over the Conservatives, at the 1970 election it was to prove fatal. The two-party swing to the Conservatives of 4.8% was fractionally below the national swing, but the damage had been done at the previous elections and it was enough to lead to a humiliating defeat.

In his concessionary speech, Brown blamed his defeat on the fact that he, as Labour's deputy leader had needed to be away from the constituency to campaign in seats around the country (BBC, 1970). There is no evidence that Brown's antics in office and his resignation in 1968 had done him any undue damage since the swing in 1970 was not materially different to the national swing. However, the main reason that the seat moved into the range in which it could be won in a good year for the Conservatives appears to have been demographic change in the early to mid 1960s. New housing was built in the rural areas of the constituency, but this was largely middle class suburban housing for wealthier Derby residents who wished to move out of the city centre. The constituency boundaries surrounded the Eastern half of the City and the electorate surged from just over 66,000 in 1955 to 86,000 at the 1970 election. Sources at the time blamed these extra electors for having tilted the balance away from Brown (BBC, 1970) (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, 1971).

Brown's loss due to middle class voters moving out of the city is only one type of demographic change, which has been observed. There can be so-called gentrification, whereby previous less desirable areas become more expensive and the population shifts towards Conservative voters, a good example of a Labour victim of this was Alf Dubs (Battersea 1987 & 1992), who failed to win

back his seat five years later despite a significant tide towards Labour in London. Another common post-war phenomenon has been the building of council estates in the inner or even outer suburbs of cities. The effects of this, are that inner city seats, typically held by Labour, become too small, thus being abolished at boundary reviews. However the construction of new council housing in outer suburbs could tilt these seats away from the Conservatives and towards Labour over the course of a few elections (Rossiter et al., 1997). Examples of this kind of effect include, Teddy Taylor (Glasgow Cathcart in 1979), Fred Silvester (Manchester Withington in 1987), Lynda Chalker (Wallasey in 1992). Thus, whilst at each boundary review Labour inner city seats disappear, between reviews, certain suburban ones have been observed to gradually drift towards Labour.

1.13 Incumbents benefitting from boundary changes: Stephen Dorrell in Leicestershire

Stephen Dorrell's record in Leicestershire demonstrates one of the problems with measuring incumbency, when the apparent incumbent, even representing a constituency with the same name, is not, to all intents and purposes, the incumbent. There was also a cross cutting problem of demographic change as the Leicestershire coal field in the North and West of the county disappeared, whilst middle class voters moved out of the City of Leicester into suburban developments outside the city boundaries. This phenomenon had already begun by the early 1970s; the apparently reliable mining seat of Bosworth had tipped over into the Conservative column at the 1970 election, and was not regained by Labour in the 1974 elections. Meanwhile, the City of Leicester saw its representation drop from four to three seats in the redistribution ahead of the 1974 whilst overspill from the City meant the county was due an extra constituency with the new seat of Blaby being created.

Stephen Dorrell was 27 at the time of the 1979 election, but had actually already fought his first election in October 1974 aged 22 in the safe Labour seat of Hull East. The constituency of Loughborough was a prime target for the Conservatives, the other of the two Leicestershire coalfield seats; it had almost followed Bosworth into the Conservative column in 1970, but the long time Labour incumbent John Cronin managed to hold on by just over 500 votes, or 1% of the vote. Cronin's majority had risen to just 4.3% in October 1974 underperforming the national trend and making him vulnerable to a swing of anything over 2% at the next election. At the 1979 Cronin managed to hold his own vote to a loss of just 2%, much better than national average, but Dorrell increased the Conservative vote by 10.8%, taking the seat and putting it into the Conservative column for the first time since 1935.

The boundary changes ahead of the 1983 election added extra two seats in Leicestershire, including one, part of which contained Rutland, which had joined the county as part of the 1972 Act. It might have appeared that the other new constituency was North West Leicestershire, but in fact counter-intuitively, the new constituency created was in fact Loughborough. The Loughborough seat on its 1983 boundaries is perhaps best described as a new constituency with

territory coming from other seats with the exception of the eponymous town (Waller, 1987).[13] The successor seat to Loughborough was in fact the rest of the former constituency, minus its town, with a section of the oversized constituency of Bosworth. Therefore, Dorrell could have credibly struck a claim to fight either NW Leicestershire or the new Loughborough constituency.

The notional projections of the new boundaries were not produced until shortly before the 1983 election, but at the time of re-selection it would have been perfectly obvious which was the more favourable of the two constituencies. Many of the remaining bits of declining coalfield including the appropriately named Coalville were to go into NW Leicestershire, whilst the new Loughborough gained areas including middle class overspill in the area between Leicester and Loughborough. As the table shows, Dorrell chose the new seat of Loughborough which had an estimated majority, based on the 1979 results, of 19.2%, as opposed to the successor seat of NW Leicestershire which had a notional Labour majority of 1.3%. The consequence of this is that at the 1983 election Dorrell cannot be considered to be an incumbent seeking re-election for the first time. The Conservative result in Loughborough, an increase of 0.9%, was similar to the trend in the East Midlands where the party's share rose by 0.4%. The majority increased to 29.5% as Labour's vote dropped 10%.

Dorrell effectively fought the 1987 election as first term incumbent. As the table shows, he managed to increase his share to 54.7%, an increase of 1.8%, a little better than average for the East Midlands of 1.4%, not a huge evidence of a sophomore surge, although the result was one of the better ones in the county. David Ashby, Dorrell's neighbour in the North West Leicestershire seat who was seeking re-election for the first time, increased his vote by 3.1%. Otherwise, Dorrell did better than other neighbours in Bosworth and Harborough where the Conservative vote fell slightly, and a tenth better than the Conservative performance in Blaby and Rutland & Melton. Dorrell's vote dropped 4% in 1992, slightly worse than the other results in the county, and worse than the performance of the Conservatives in the East Midlands where the vote dropped 2%. This left Dorrell a majority of 18.3%, an apparently safe seat, but given the appalling performance of the Conservatives at the 1997 election, it would be reasonable to speculate that he would have been likely to lose the seat on those boundaries had they remained.

The *Fourth Periodic Review of the Boundary Commission* allocated an extra seat to Leicestershire creating the new seat of Charnwood containing territory from Bosworth, Rutland & Melton, Blaby and Loughborough, and situated between the latter and the City of Leicester (Waller and Criddle, 1999). The consequence of this reallocation is summarized in the table, and it made the constituency of Loughborough very much more marginal than it had been in 1992. The estimate for the 1992 notionals on the new boundaries reduced the margin in Loughborough to 7%, less than Dorrell had had in his first victory in 1979. The constituency of Charnwood, had an estimated majority of 39% for the Conservatives, boosted by the inclusion of the middle class suburbs just outside the Leicester City boundaries. As a Cabinet Minister, Dorrell was well placed to seek the nomination for the new seat of Charnwood, which he won. The

consequence of this is at the 1997 election; there was effectively a retirement for Loughborough where the incumbent had moved on, and Dorrell once again fighting the election as a non-incumbent.

Dorrell's decision to move once again proved to be a wise one, with the Loughborough seat lost to Labour on a swing of 9%. That said, the result was actually far worse in Dorrell's new constituency, where the much of the 39% notional majority was demolished by a 14.1% fall in the Conservative share and a 14.4% increase in Labour's vote from the 1997 notionals. The 2001 result also shows little evidence of a first time surge in the new constituency of Charnwood, whilst his vote rose 1.8%, more than the national average, it was still less of an increase than in two of the three surviving Conservative seats in the county, Harborough and Rutland & Melton, although slightly better than in Bosworth. Whilst the course of Dorrell's career does not show evidence of large slump and surge effects, it does demonstrate some of the pitfalls of trying to assess incumbency from the point of view of the member's career. The correct path to follow is the one of the constituencies and whether the candidate there is the actual incumbent, or really an MP from a different neighbouring constituency who has moved.

1.14 Independent candidates and incumbency: Dr Richard Taylor wins twice in Wyre Forest

There have been comparatively few actual independent members elected as such to the House of Commons since 1945.[14] The Nuffield Study of the election of that year (McCallum and Readman, 1947) derided independents stating that electing one was rather like taking a wicket with a no-ball. The Wyre Forest experience combined an individual who was highly respected locally, with a potent single issue, that of the NHS. It is arguable that the subject Dr Richard Taylor was not a true independent because he had a local party machine and councillors elected under the banner of the Kidderminster Hospital and Health Concern "KHHC". However, since the movement only stood in one constituency and only had councillors in the Wyre Forest district, Taylor was effectively on his own and sat as such in the House of Commons. Additionally, since its defeat in 2010, KHHC has arguably acknowledged this fact by ceasing to be an independent movement, joining forces with the National Health Action Party, which is planning to field candidates in a number of constituencies.

Table 1.14 shows the results in Wyre Forest from 1997 to 2010. Prior to the 1997 election the Wyre Forest constituency had been considered to be a reasonably safe Conservative seat, the party having previously won it, and additionally the pre-1983 seat of Kidderminster never having been won by Labour. The latter picked up the constituency in 1997, winning by over 12% of the vote, with incumbent Anthony Coombs being turned out after 10 years. However, a controversy brewed up between 1997 and 2001 with Kidderminster Hospital becoming threatened by the Government's NHS plans, and the KHHC movement forming to challenge the decision. Initially, KHHC opted to fight for seats on the Wyre Forest local authority, becoming the largest party in the 2000 local elections.

At the 2001 election, the group chose Dr Richard Taylor, a former consultant physician at Kidderminster Hospital, and chairman of the 'Friends of the Hospital' as their candidate (Waller and Criddle, 2007). Taylor was helped slightly by the decision of the local Liberal Democrats to stand down in his favour, not a huge sacrifice given they had only won 8% at the 1997 election. The result was a landslide win for Dr Taylor, who with over 58% of the vote from a zero start. The incumbent Labour MP, a junior Minister, David Lock, saw his vote share more than halve from 48% to 22%, whilst the Conservative vote share dropped from 36% to 19%. The 2001 result was proven to be very far from a one-off protest vote. Dr Taylor managed to achieve re-election in 2005 despite the apparent threat to the hospital diminishing somewhat and an increase in the Conservative vote. Taylor's share dropped to just under 40%, with the Conservative share rising just under 10% to 29%. Taylor's incumbency wasn't enough to save him in 2010, but his vote share remained very high by the standards of most independents and the scale of his defeat was not all that large. At this election, in which he did face a Liberal Democrat challenge, which garnered just under 12% of the vote, Taylor still managed 31.7%, a fall of just over 8% on the 2005 result. Taylor was unlucky in that the opposition vote was better concentrated, with a drop of 8% in the Labour vote and an increase of the same for the Conservatives, allowing their candidate, Mark Garnier to win on his second attempt.

The main source for the election independents has been a fall-out between MPs and their local or national parties, resulting in their de-selection. The incumbent MP then goes on to re-stand, either in the hope of re-election due their local support, or for revenge to split the vote. It is fairly unusual for these challenges to be successful, the best examples being S.O. Davies (Merthyr Tydfil in 1970), Dick Taverne (Lincoln in 1973 by election, Feb 1974, defeated Oct 1974), Eddie Milne (Blyth in Feb 1974, defeated in Oct 1974). One could argue that being re-elected, as an independent requires the ultimate form of incumbency advantage. The candidate depends entirely on their personal record and local support, without any reason for a voter to support them to elect the executive, or a party machine to back them up nationally.

1.15 Changing parties (1): Robert MacLennan in Caithness

Robert Maclennan won the most northerly seat on the UK mainland, Caithness & Sutherland at the 1966 election, from a Liberal who had himself picked up the seat after the retirement of an independent Conservative incumbent in 1964. Having won re-election in 1970, he continued to serve as the Labour MP for the seat until defecting in 1981. However, it is worth noting, that as Table 1.15 shows, his hold over the seat as the Labour incumbent was never all that secure with a vote share ranging from 33.9 to 41.4%, and relying on a three or four way split to gain election on such a relatively low vote share. His majorities in the four elections 1970s in percentage terms varied very little from 9.6 to 11.3%.

Having left the Labour Party in 1981 to join the SDP, Maclennan's electoral record improved dramatically. In 1983, his vote share, under the SDP's colours

was 52%, 29.4% ahead of the Conservatives. The result was all the more remarkable in that the Liberals had given up the ghost in 1979 and failed even to field a candidate after slipping to third place in October 1974. The effect on Labour's performance in the constituency is a good demonstration of the effect of his move to the SDP. Labour's vote collapsed from 41.4 in 1979 to just 14.2% showing the devastating impact of Maclennan standing for the SDP instead of them. In incumbency terms, it is difficult to classify the case. It is certainly reasonable to say that Labour suffered a retirement in that their incumbent from 1979 did not contest the 1983 election, but whether he could be reasonably treated as an SPD/Liberal incumbent is open to question. The answer to this for the thesis is to treat the 1983 SPD defectors as a special case open to exclusion or separate categorization. Maclennan's victory in 1983 was the most successful of the defectors, other such defectors also increased the vote share from the Liberal's 1979 total dramatically, such as David Owen in Plymouth Devenport who increased the SDP vote by 36.5% over the Liberal total, whilst Labour's vote plunged 20%.

1.16 Changing parties (2): Jack Aspinwall in Kingswood

The last case, that of Jack Aspinwall, is almost certainly unique in the 1955-2010 period. The Boundary Commission's second periodic review created a new constituency north east of Bristol named Kingswood, for the election that was held in February 1974, and was expected to be a marginal Conservative held seat with a majority of just over 5% over Labour in a notional two-way contest. The fact that the notionals were calculated on a two-way basis was because Kingswood was formed out of constituencies that had faced such two-way contests in 1970. At the election, Labour's Terry Walker defeated Charles Irving, with a majority of 3.4%, but with the Liberals represented by Jack Aspinwall polling 26% from effectively a standing start. Aspinwall saw his Liberal vote squeezed by 8.5% at the October when he stood again, as Labour and the Conservatives both increased their vote, although the then first term incumbent Terry Walker saw his majority increase to 6.5% over a new Conservative candidate David Hunt.

At the 1979 election, Aspinwall not only changed parties, but also stood for his new party in the same constituency. Whilst there are many cases of incumbent MPs changing parties or former Labour MPs fighting for the SDP in the 1980s, this case appears to the only apparent example of where a repeat challenger candidate switched sides and fought in the same constituency at the next election. Given the extremely small size of the margin in 1979, 0.58%, the question comes to mind as to whether or not it might have tipped the balance allowing the Conservatives to win the seat in 1979. As Table 1.16 shows, Aspinwall managed to increase the Conservative vote by 6.9%, actually less than in three of the five Bristol seats and Labour's vote increased in Kingswood, despite falling in all five Bristol seats, ranging from 0.8% to 3.7% against Tony Benn in Bristol SE. The key point though, is perhaps the extent to which Aspinwall's defection damaged the Liberals whose vote slumped 8.2%, considerably worse than the 6.6% mean decline in the five Bristol seats and worse than in all of one of them. It is therefore not unreasonable to consider

whether Aspinwall could have taken enough Liberals with him due to his popularity as a candidate to have made the difference.

1.17 Summary:

The key conclusion of the chapter is that the incumbency factor is not a uniform phenomenon and that it risks being obscured or confused with events or noise in the data if insufficient account is taken of these. The vanilla example of Exeter is a useful one as it gives pretty clear evidence of a first time surge for both the two incumbents analysed, but even here, there were clearly demographic factors at play that added to the City's shift first towards the Conservatives and then back to Labour. Failure to take account of the two major boundary changes in 1974 and 2010 would also have exaggerated the apparent importance of incumbency.

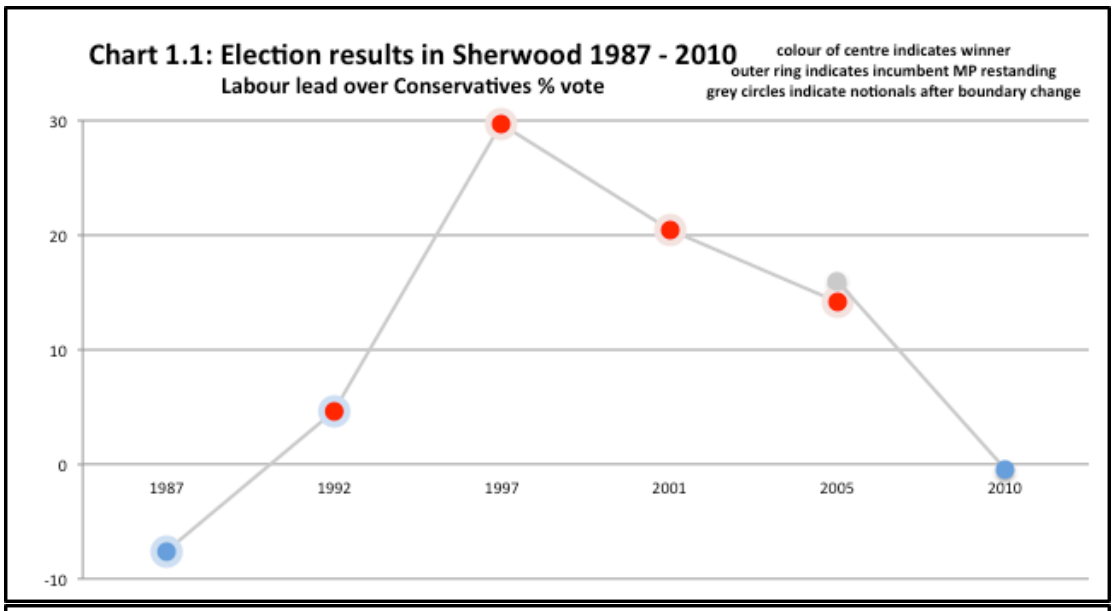
The five examples where the Liberals / Liberal Democrats are surveyed, show the power of the third party's ability to use the incumbency factor in action. The results from Yeovil show the extent to which Paddy Ashdown was able to use repeat candidacy as a springboard to win the second time in 1983, and show David Laws benefiting from a first time surge of 7%. Likewise the example of Lynne Featherstone shows her being able to increase the Lib Dem vote from 11 to 46% over the course of four elections, and the unusual example of Caithness shows how Robert Maclennan was able to take the seat with him when defecting from Labour to the Alliance. Even in the unsuccessful case of Stuart Mole in Chelmsford, there is clearly good evidence that he was able to build up a substantial personal following despite being narrowly unsuccessful.

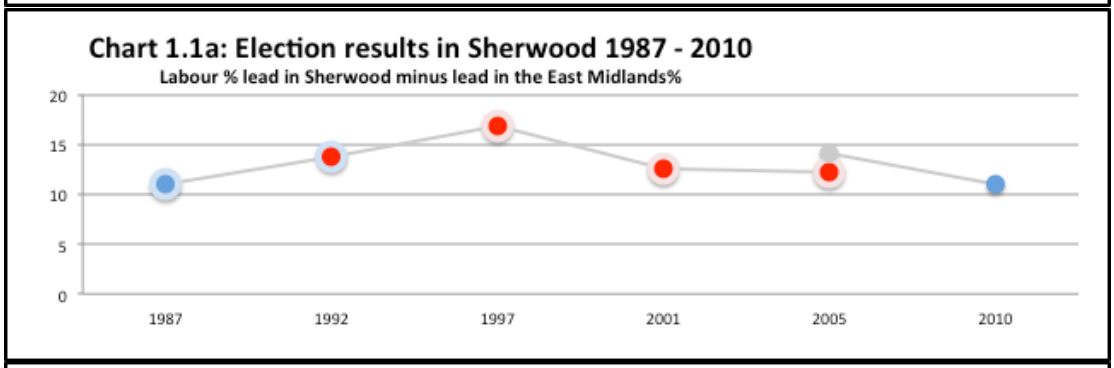
The experience in Wolverhampton gives a very mixed answer to the question about whether the incumbent MP's own view makes a difference or not. In Renee Short's case, having an extreme-left position and championing unpopular causes like abortion appear to have made no difference whatsoever; she enjoyed an incumbency advantage and is clear her retirement was decisive in losing Labour the seat in 1987. Meanwhile, Enoch Powell clearly had an extremely large incumbency advantage which can only assume came from his populist standpoint on immigration. One could ask whether a high national profile could have helped Powell, but this is contradicted by some of the other examples, especially the section on Mrs Thatcher, which shows that her incumbency advantage was very ordinary. Likewise, the Liberal Democrats did not appear to have suffered a larger than usual retirement slump from the retirement of their leader in 2001.

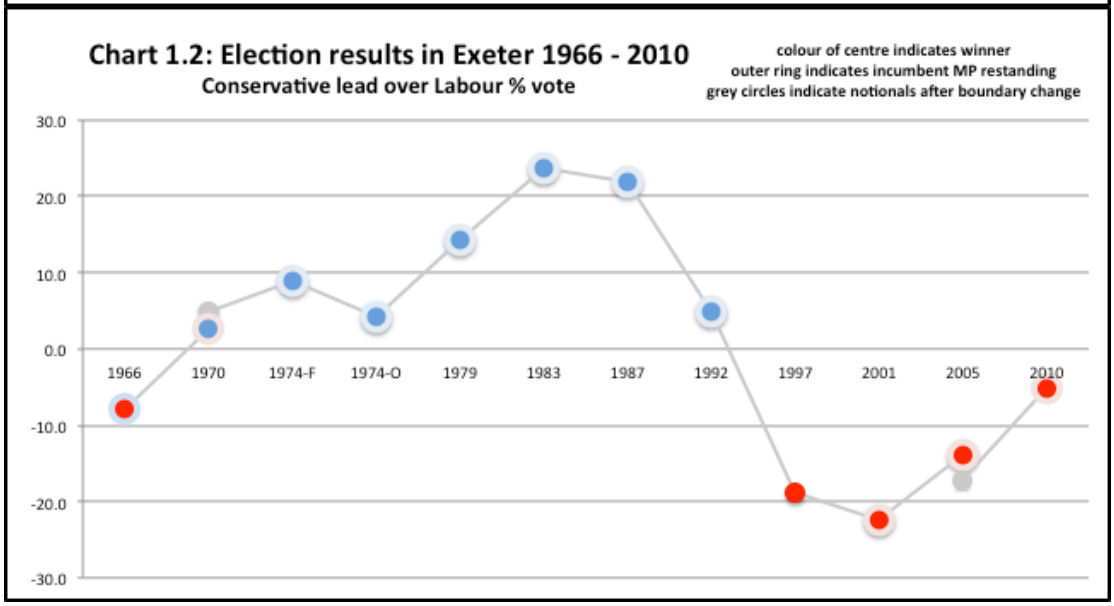
Finally, these examples show the importance of maintaining sufficient controls to take account of changes in constituency boundaries, demographics and indeed the status of the other parties. For constituency boundaries changes account can be taken by using estimated notional results, but these are only available for the boundary changes in 1974 and onwards which means it would be very difficult to try to measure incumbency at election such as 1945, 1950 and 1955 after boundary changes took effect. To account for demographic or regional shifts, controls must be added to the quantitative data for socioeconomic factors as well as regional or county level dummy variables. In the earlier examples, one of the

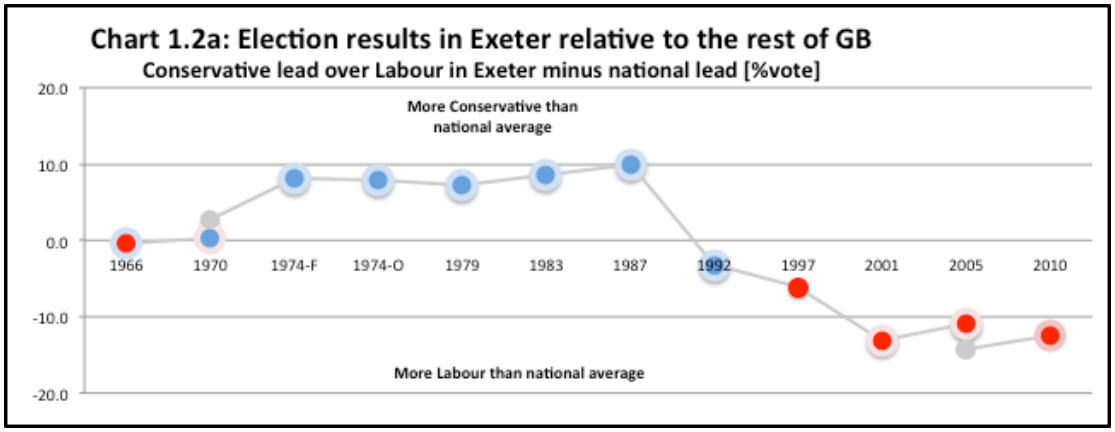
key issues is that the Liberals did not always stand at every election, with withdrawals and interventions clouding the picture. The solution in these cases was to look at the share of the two-party vote instead of the absolute vote.

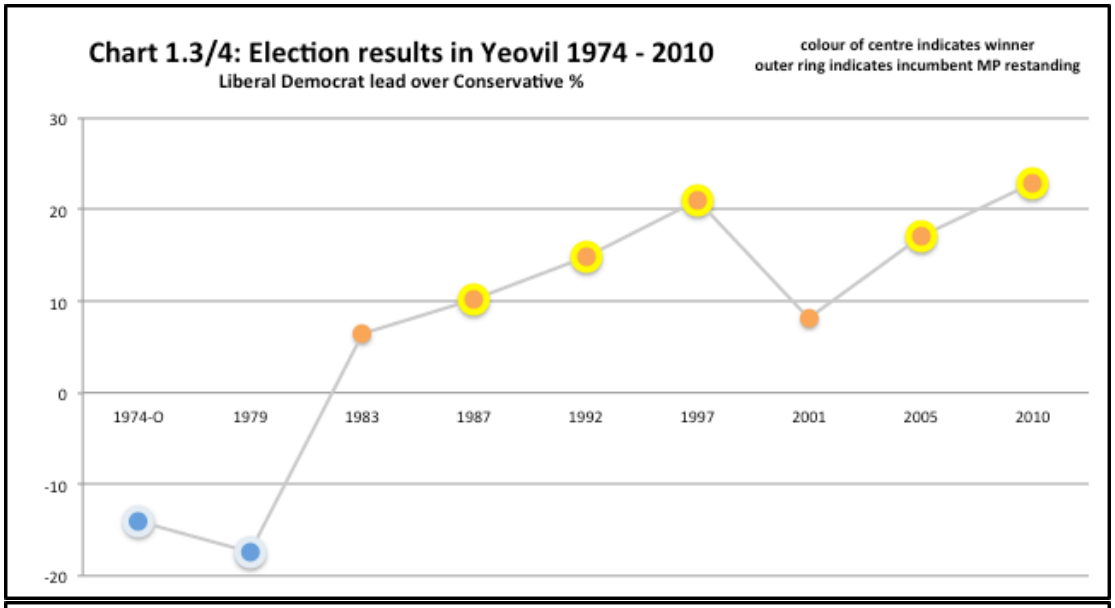
Charts:

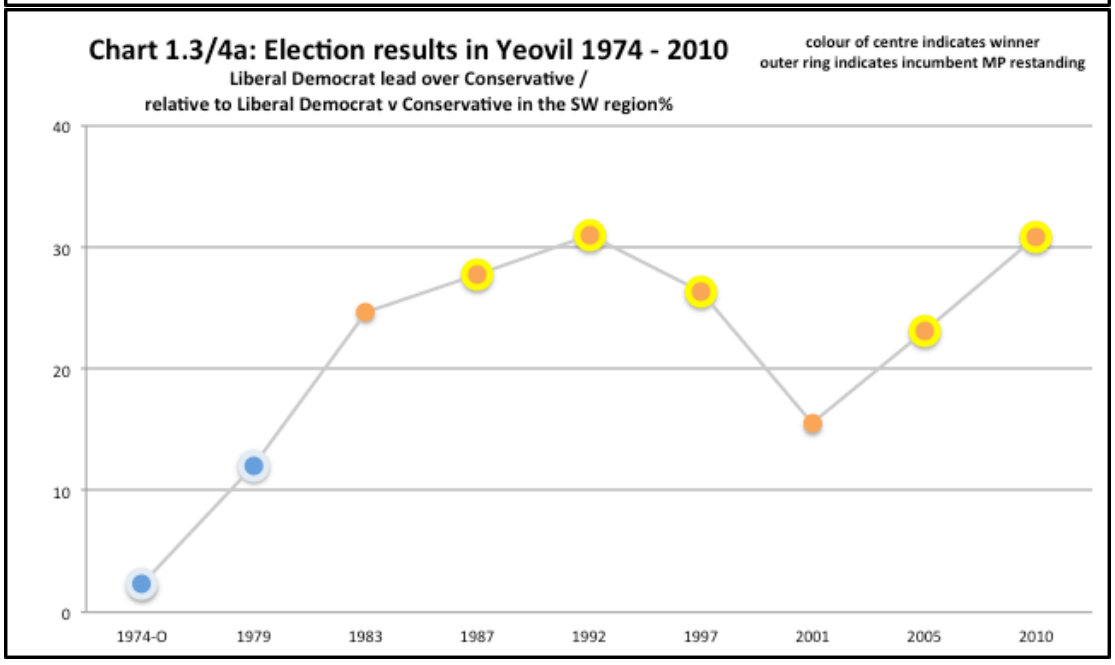

Chart 1.1: Election results in Sherwood 1987 - 2010
Labour lead over Conservatives % vote
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
30
20
10
0
-10
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

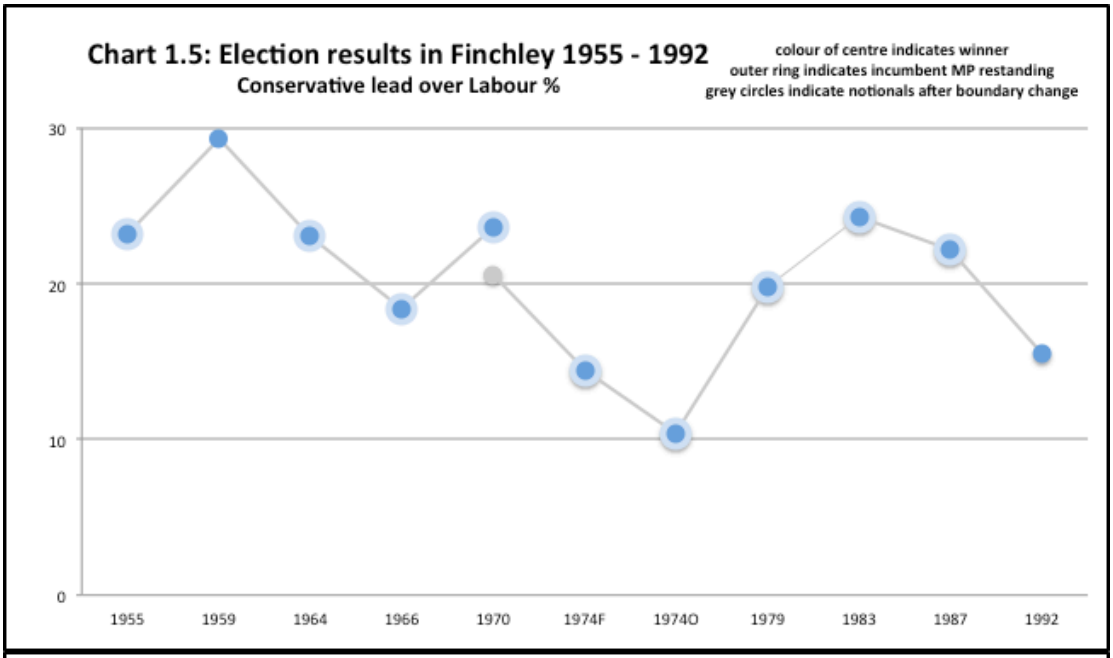

Chart 1.1a: Election results in Sherwood 1987 - 2010
Labour % lead in Sherwood minus lead in the East Midlands%
20
15
10
5
0
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

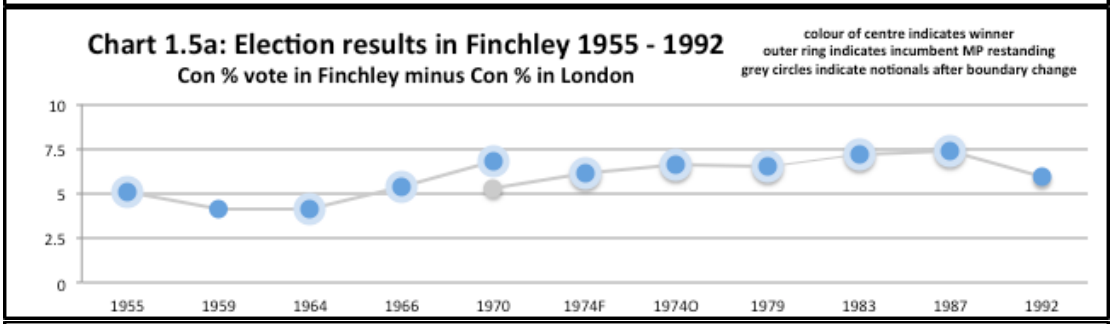

Chart 1.2: Election results in Exeter 1966 - 2010
Conservative lead over Labour % vote
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
-10.0
-20.0
-30.0
1966
1970
1974-F
1974-O
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

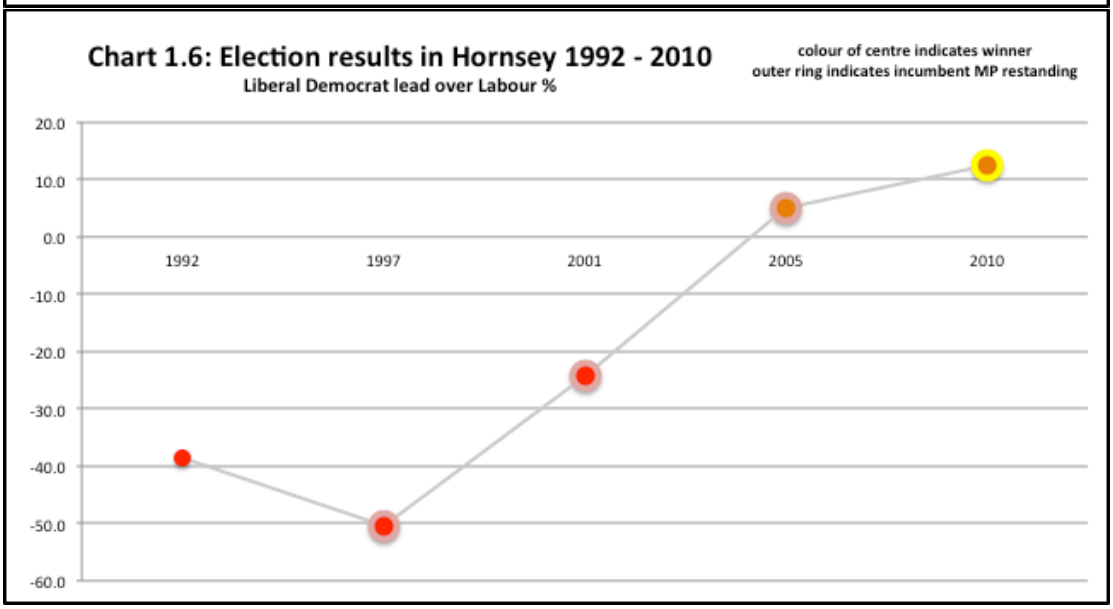

Chart 1.2a: Election results in Exeter relative to the rest of GB
Conservative lead over Labour in Exeter minus national lead [%vote]
20.0
10.0
0.0
-10.0
-20.0
More Conservative than national average
More Labour than national average
1966
1970
1974-F
1974-O
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

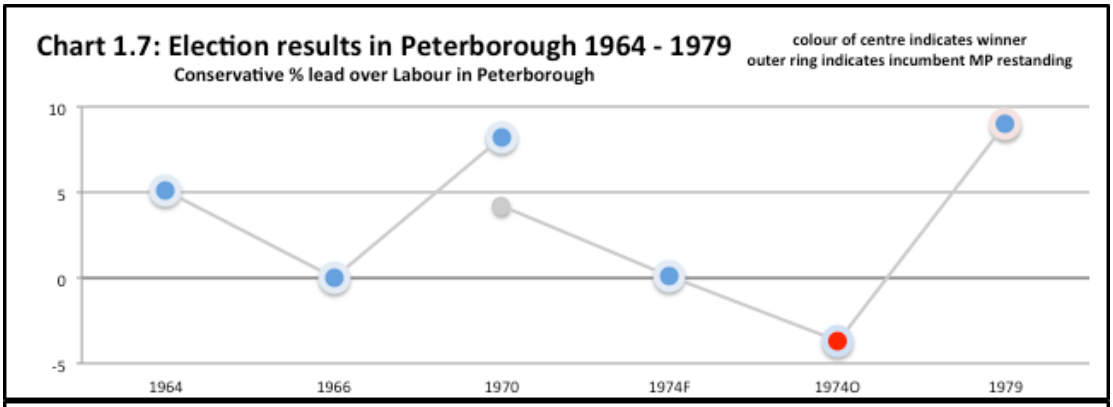

Chart 1.3/4: Election results in Yeovil 1974 - 2010
Liberal Democrat lead over Conservative %
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
30
20
10
0
-10
-20
1974-O
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

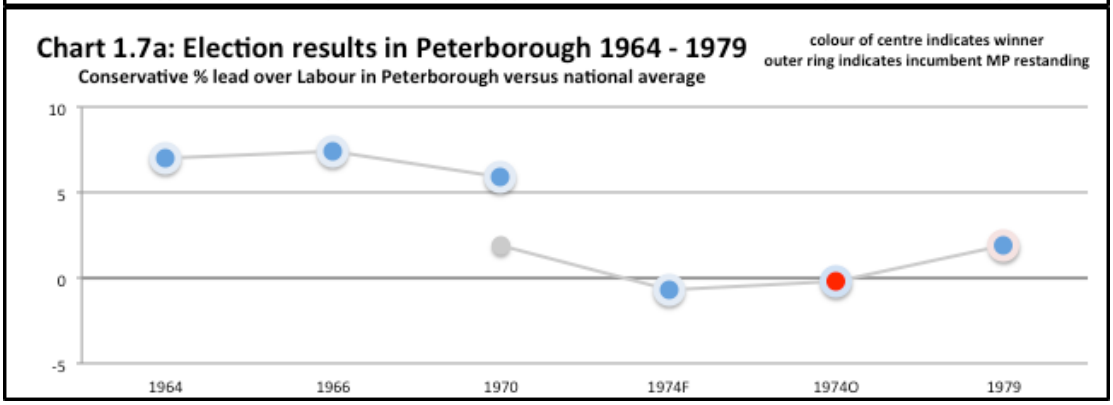

Chart 1.3/4a: Election results in Yeovil 1974 - 2010
Liberal Democrat lead over Conservative /
relative to Liberal Democrat v Conservative in the SW region%
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
40
30
20
10
0
1974-O
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

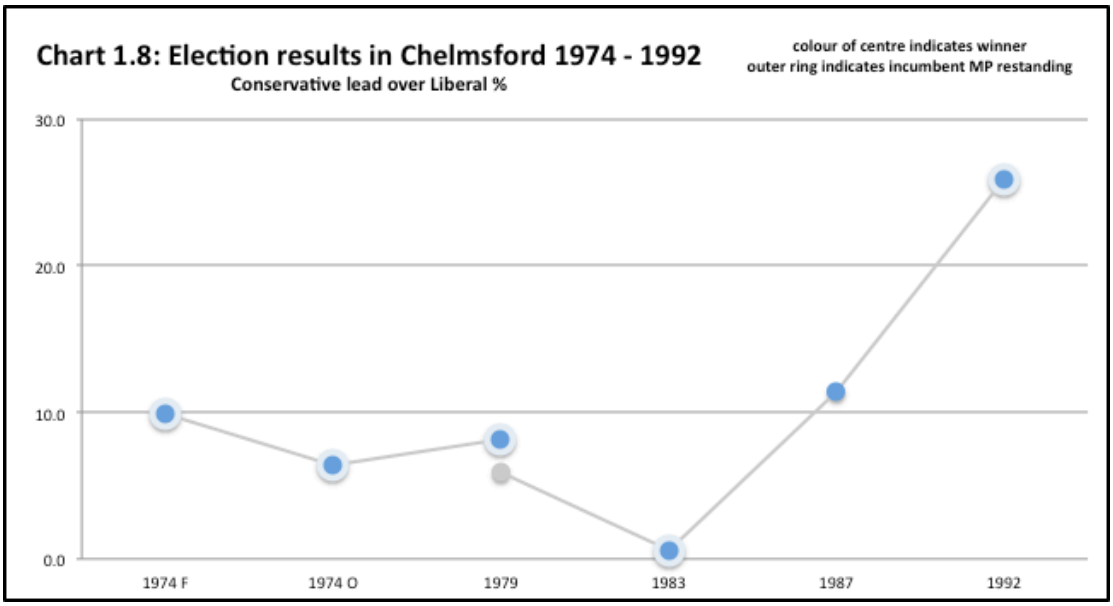

Chart 1.5: Election results in Finchley 1955 - 1992
Conservative lead over Labour %
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
30
20
10
0
1955
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974F
1974O
1979
1983
1987
1992

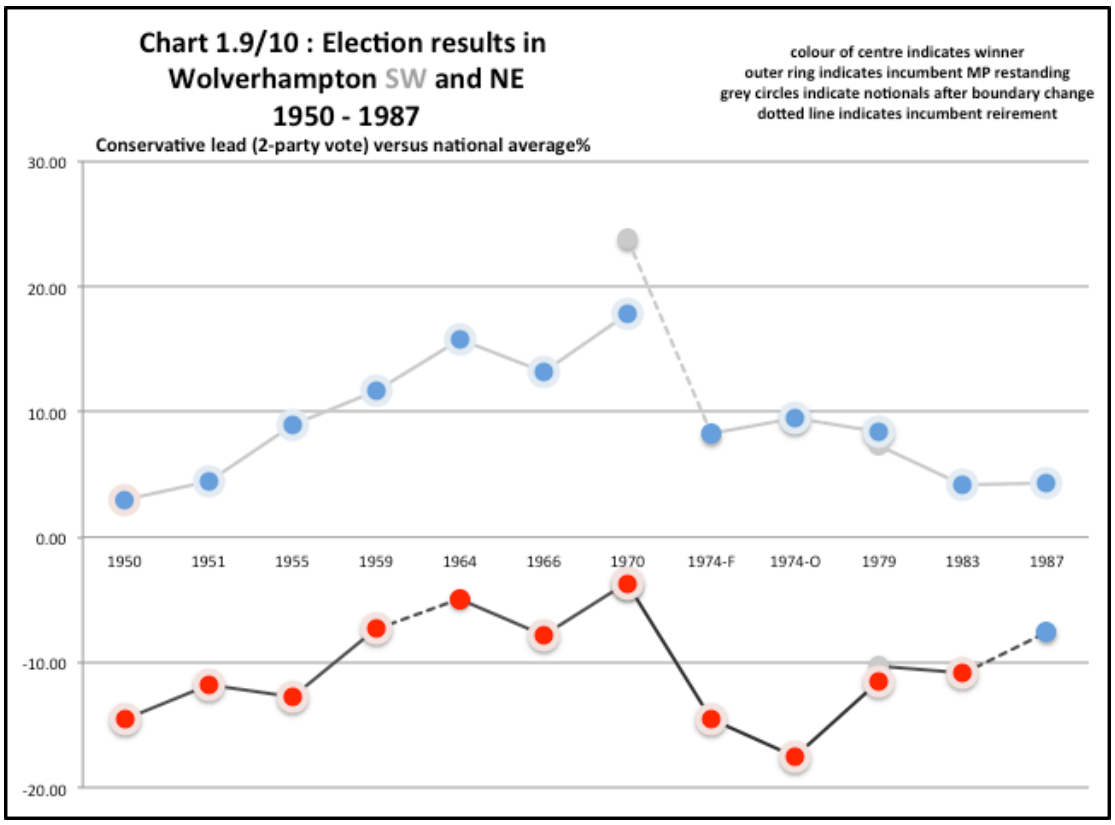

Chart 1.5a: Election results in Finchley 1955 - 1992
Con % vote in Finchley minus Con % in London
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
10
7.5
5
2.5
0
1955
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974F
1974O
1979
1983
1987
1992

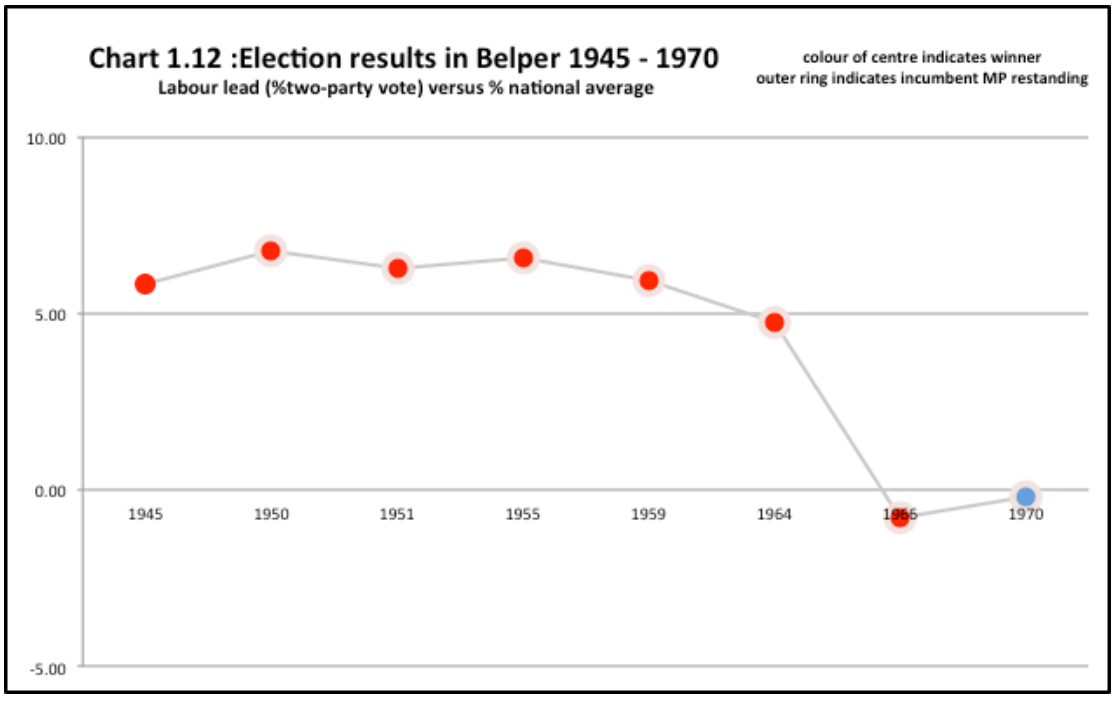

Chart 1.6: Election results in Hornsey 1992 - 2010
Liberal Democrat lead over Labour %
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
20.0
10.0
0.0
-10.0
-20.0
-30.0
-40.0
-50.0
-60.0
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010

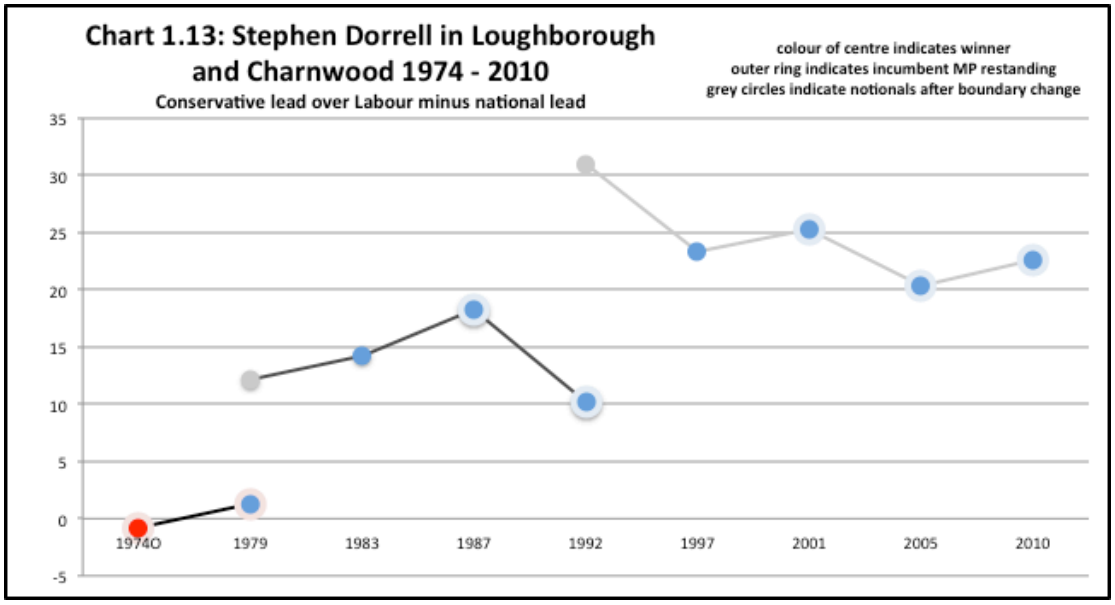

Chart 1.7: Election results in Peterborough 1964 - 1979
Conservative % lead over Labour in Peterborough
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
10
5
0
-5
1964
1966
1970
1974F
1974O
1979

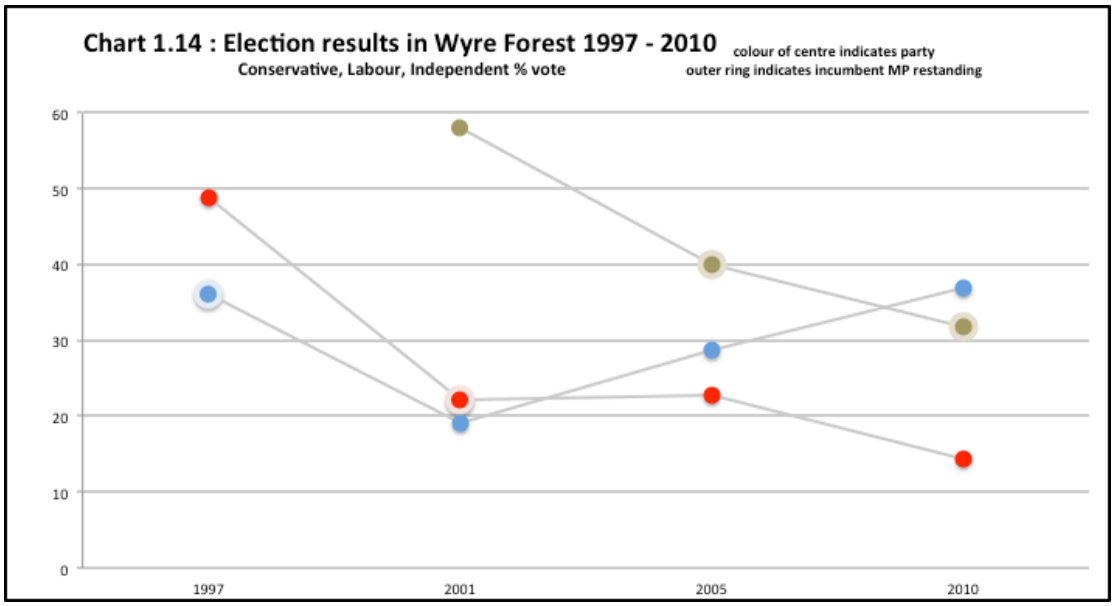

Chart 1.7a: Election results in Peterborough 1964 - 1979
Conservative % lead over Labour in Peterborough versus national average
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
10
5
0
-5
1964
1966
1970
1974F
1974O
1979

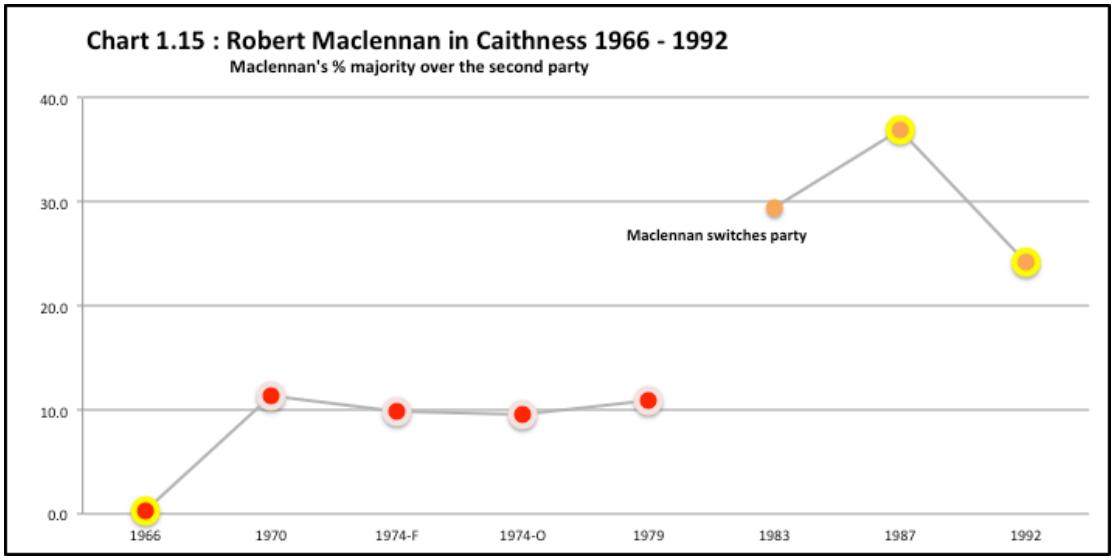

Chart 1.8: Election results in Chelmsford 1974 - 1992
Conservative lead over Liberal %
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
1974 F
1974 O
1979
1983
1987
1992


Chart 1.9/10 : Election results in Wolverhampton SW and NE 1950 - 1987
Conservative lead (2-party vote) versus national average%
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
dotted line indicates incumbent reirement
30.00
20.00
10.00
0.00
-10.00
-20.00
1950
1951
1955
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-F
1974-O
1979
1983
1987


Chart 1.12 :Election results in Belper 1945 - 1970
Labour lead (%two-party vote) versus % national average
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
10.00
5.00
0.00
-5.00
1945
1950
1951
1955
1959
1964
1970


Chart 1.13: Stephen Dorrell in Loughborough and Charnwood 1974 - 2010
Conservative lead over Labour minus national lead
colour of centre indicates winner
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
grey circles indicate notionals after boundary change
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
-5
1974O
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010


Chart 1.14 : Election results in Wyre Forest 1997 - 2010
Conservative, Labour, Independent % vote
colour of centre indicates party
outer ring indicates incumbent MP restanding
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1997
2001
2005
2010


Chart 1.15 : Robert Maclennan in Caithness 1966 - 1992
Maclennan's % majority over the second party
40.0
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
Maclennan switches party
1966
1970
1974-F
1974-O
1979
1983
1987
1992

Chapter 1 tables:

Table 1.1: Paddy Tipping in Sherwood

	Lab Candidate	Lab%	Con candidate	Con%	Lib %	Oth %
1987	William Bach	38.2	Andy Stewart (i)	45.8	16	
1992	Paddy Tipping	47.5	Andy Stewart (i)	42.9	9.6	
	no material boundary changes					
1997	Paddy Tipping (i)	58.5	Roland Spencer	28.8	8.6	4.1
2001	Paddy Tipping (i)	54.2	Brandon Lewis	33.8	11.9	
2005	Paddy Tipping (i)	48.4	Bruce Laughton	34.3	13.5	3.7
2005-adj		49.4		33.4	13.4	3.7
2010	Leonie Mather	38.8	Mark Spencer	39.2	15.3	6.3

Table 1.2: John Hannam and Ben Bradshaw in Exeter

	Lab Candidate	Lab%	Con candidate	Con%	Lib %	Oth %
1966	GP Dunwody	**48.6**	Dudley Williams (i)	40.8	10.7	
1970	GP Dunwody (i)	42.4	Sir John Hannam	45.0	12.6	
	boundary changes					
1970-ADJ		40.8		45.8	13.4	
1974F	G Powell	31.2	Sir John Hannam (i)	**40.1**	28.8	
1974O	FK Taylor	36.4	Sir John Hannam (i)	**40.7**	22.9	
1979	GW Hobbs	34.1	Sir John Hannam (i)	**48.4**	15.6	1.9
	no material boundary changes					
1983	R Evans	22.8	Sir John Hannam (i)	**46.5**	22.8	1.4
1987	JA Vincent	22.5	Sir John Hannam (i)	**44.4**	31.8	1.3
1992	JN Lloyd	36.2	Sir John Hannam (i)	**41.1**	19.4	3.2
	no material boundary changes					
1997	Ben Bradshaw	**47.5**	Adrian Rodgers	28.6	18	5.8
2001	Ben Bradshaw (i)	**49.8**	Anne Jobson	27.4	12.4	10.4
2005	Ben Bradshaw (i)	**41.1**	Peter Cox	27.2	20.6	11.1
2005-ADJ		42.1		24.9	20.9	12.1
2010	Ben Bradshaw (i)	**38.2**	Hannah Foster	33	20.3	9.6

Table 1.3/1.4: Liberal Democrats in Yeovil

Yeovil

	Lib/LD candidate	LD%	Con candidate	Con %	Lab %	Oth %
1974-Oct	Geoffrey Taylor	29.0	JWW Peyton (i)	**43.0**	29.0	
1979	Paddy Ashdown	30.5	JWW Peyton (i)	**47.9**	21.6	
	major boundary changes					
1979ADJ	-	30.5	-	47.8	21.7	
1983	Paddy Ashdown	**50.5**	David Martin	44.0	5.6	
1987	Paddy Ashdown (i)	**51.4**	GD Sandeman	41.3	7.3	
1992	Paddy Ashdown (i)	**51.7**	JT Davidson	36.9	9.6	1.7
	no material boundary changes					
1997	Paddy Ashdown (i)	**48.7**	N Cambrook	27.7	14.9	8.7
2001	David Laws	**44.2**	M Fogione	36.0	14.7	5.0
2005	David Laws (i)	**51.4**	I Jenkins	34.3	10.5	3.8
	no material boundary changes					
2010	David Laws (i)	**55.7**	K Davis	32.9	5.2	6.1

Table 1.5 : Mrs Thatcher's record in Finchley

Finchley

	Con candidate	Con %	Lab candidate	Lab %	Lib %	Oth %	Con % in Lond.	Lab % in Lond.
1955	JFE Crowder (i)	**54.6**	TR Lancaster	31.4	14.0		49.5	47.4
1959	MH Thatcher	**53.6**	EP Deakins	24.3	22.1		49.5	42.9
1964	MH Thatcher (i)	**46.6**	AE Tomlinson	23.5	29.9		42.5	44
1966	MH Thatcher (i)	**46.5**	Y Sieve	28.1	25.4		41.1	48.6
1970	MH Thatcher (i)	**53.8**	MI Freeman	30.2	16.1		47.0	45.4
	Major boundary changes							
1970ADJ		52.3		31.7	16.1		47.0	45.4
1974F	MH Thatcher (i)	**43.7**	MJ O'Connor	29.3	27.0		37.6	40.5
1974O	MH Thatcher (i)	**44.0**	MJ O'Connor	33.6	19.7	2.7	37.4	43.9
1979	MH Thatcher (i)	**52.5**	R May	32.7	13.2	1.6	46.0	39.6
	No material boundary changes							
1983	MH Thatcher (i)	**51.1**	LG Spiegel	26.8	20.2	2.2	43.9	29.8
1987	MH Thatcher (i)	**53.9**	JRM Davies	31.7	13.9	0.5	46.5	31.5
1992	VEH Booth	**51.2**	AC Majoram	35.7	11.1	2.0	45.3	37.1

Table 1.6: Lynne Featherstone in Hornsey

Hornsey & Wood Green

	Lab candidate	Lab%	LD candidate	Lib%	Con%	Oth%
1992	Barbara Roche	**48.5**	Peter Dunphy	9.9	39.2	2.4
1997	B Roche (i)	**61.7**	L. Featherstone	11.3	21.9	5.1
2001	B Roche (i)	**49.9**	L. Featherstone	25.8	15.7	8.7
2005	B Roche (i)	38.3	L. Featherstone	**43.3**	12.7	5.7
2010	Karen Jennings	34.0	L. F'stone (i)	**46.5**	16.7	2.9
	No material boundary changes in 1995 or 2007					

Table 1.7 : Peterborough

Peterborough

	Lab candidate	Lab %	Con candidate	Con %	Lib %	Margin
1964	D Saunders	41.5	Sir Harmar Nichols	**46.6**	12.0	**2,617**
1966	Michael Ward	46.1	Sir Harmar Nichols	**46.1**	7.8	**3**
1970	Michael Ward	45.9	Sir Harmar Nichols	**54.1**		**4,565**
	boundary changes					
1970ADJ	-	47.9	-	52.1		1,900
1974F	Michael Ward	39.5	Sir Harmar Nichols	**39.6**	20.9	**22**
1974O	Michael Ward	**44.4**	Sir Harmar Nichols	40.7	14.9	**1,848**
1979	Michael Ward (i)	39.8	BS Mawhinney	**48.8**	10.0	**5,102**

Table 1.8: Liberal five times shy in Chelmsford

Chelmsford

	Con candidate	Con%	Lib candidate	Lib%	Lab%	Oth%
1959	H Ashton (i)	**59.8**	none		40.2	
1964	N StJ-Stevas	**48.0**	WP Longhurst	16.2	35.8	
1966	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**47.2**	WP Longhurst	13.9	39.0	
1970	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**55.2**	Jessie Hunt	8.7	35.6	
	boundary change					
1970ADJ		54.0		8.7	36.8	
1974 F	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**42.9**	Stuart Mole	33.0	24.1	
1974 O	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**41.6**	Stuart Mole	35.2	23.2	
1979	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**49.6**	Stuart Mole	41.5	8.9	
	boundary change					
		47.5		41.6	10.9	
1983	N StJ-Stevas (i)	**47.6**	Stuart Mole	47.0	5.1	0.2
1987	Simon Burns	**51.9**	Stuart Mole	40.5	6.8	0.7
1992	Simon Burns (i)	**55.3**	Hugh Nicolson	29.4	14.2	1.1

Table 1.9/1.10 : Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton SW

	Con candidate	Con %	Lab candidate	Lab %	Lib %	Oth %	Con % (C/L)
1950	JE Powell	**46.0**	HD Hughes (i)	44.4	9.6		50.9
1951	JE Powell (i)	**53.6**	A L-Davies	46.4			53.6
1955	JE Powell (i)	**60.0**	L Burgess	40.0			60.0
1959	JE Powell (i)	**63.9**	E Thorne	36.1			63.9
1964	JE Powell (i)	**57.4**	A Gardner	31.4	11.2		64.6
1966	JE Powell (i)	**59.1**	A Collier	40.9			59.1
1970	JE Powell (i)	**64.3**	J Bamfield	28.8	6.0	0.8	70.4
	major boundary changes						
1970ADJ	-	70.1	-	23.3	5.9	0.7	75.1
1974F	NW Budgen	**45.7**	H Middleweek	32.1	19.2	3	58.7

Wolverhampton NE

	Lab candidate	Lab %	Con candidate	Con %	Lib %	Oth %	
1959	John Baird (i)	**55.1**	OA Pomeroy	44.9			44.9
1964	Renee Short	**56.0**	MMM Greenawa	44.0			44.0
1966	Renee Short (i)	**61.9**	GI Wright	38.1			38.1
1970	Renee Short (i)	**49.9**	GI Wright	45.5		4.6	47.7
	major boundary changes						
1970ADJ	-	50.0	-	45.3		4.7	47.5
1974F	Renee Short (i)	**59.7**	PW Hawksley	33.6		6.7	36.0
1974O	Renee Short (i)	**56.1**	PW Hawksley	24.2	15.5	4.2	30.1
1979	Renee Short (i)	**50.0**	JP Evans	37.4	9.9	2.7	42.8
	major boundary changes						
1979ADJ	-	49.0	-	38.6	9.7	2.7	44.1
1983	Renee Short (i)	**40.1**	AT Burnside	39.6	19.0	1.3	49.7
1987	K Purchase	41.7	MP Hicks	**42.1**	16.2		50.2

Table 1.11 : Lembit Opik in Montgomeryshire

Montgomery

	LD candidate	LD%	Con candidate	Con%
1992	AC Carlile (i)	**48.5**	J F-Hayhurst	32.7
	no material boundary changes - name changed to Montgomerysl			
1997	L Opik	**45.9**	EG Davies	26.1
2001	L Opik (i)	**49.4**	David Jones	27.9
2005	L Opik (i)	**51.2**	Simon Baynes	27.4
	no material boundary changes			
2010	L Opik (i)	37.8	EG Davies	41.3

Table 1.12 : George Brown in Belper

	Belper					
	Lab candidate	Lab%	Con candidate	Con%	Lib%	Lab % two party vote
1945	George Brown	**52.9**	G Hampson	33.5	13.6	61.2
	major boundary changes					
1950	George Brown (i)	**53.2**	M Argyle	37.1	9.7	58.9
1951	George Brown (i)	**57.1**	S Middup	42.9	-	57.1
1955	George Brown (i)	**55.6**	J Twells	44.4	-	55.6
1959	George Brown (i)	**53.7**	J Ratcliffe	46.3	-	53.7
1964	George Brown (i)	**47.3**	J Lowther	37.5	15.2	55.8
1966	George Brown (i)	**53.3**	J Lowther	46.7	-	53.3
1970	George Brown (i)	48.5	G Stewart-Smith	**51.5**	-	48.5

Table 1.13 : Stephen Dorrell - Loughborough & Charnwood

	Loughborough					
	Con candidate	Con %	Lab candidate	Lab %	Lib %	Oth %
1974O	RM York	37.2	JD Cronin (i)	**41.5**	18.9	2.4
1979	Stephen Dorrell	**48.0**	JD Cronin (i)	39.6	10.7	1.8
	Major boundary changes					
	Successor seat NW Leicestershire					
1979 adj	-	42.7		44.2	11.6	
	New seat Loughborough					
1979 adj	-	52.0		32.7	14.3	1.0
1983	Stephen Dorrell	**52.9**	Mike Jones	23.4	22.2	1.5
1987	Stephen Dorrell (i)	**54.7**	CJ Wrigley	24.5	19.7	1.1
1992	Stephen Dorrell (i)	**50.7**	Andy Reed	32.4	15.1	1.8
	major boundary changes					
	Successor seat Loughborough					
1992ADJ	-	46.8		39.8	11.3	
1997	K Andrew	37.6	Andy Reed	**48.6**	11.8	1.9
	New seat Charnwood					
1992ADJ	-	60.6		21.6	17.8	
1997	Stephen Dorrell	**46.5**	David Knaggs	36.0	12.9	4.6
2001	Stephen Dorrell (i)	**48.2**	Sean Sheahan	32.2	16.2	3.3
2005	Stephen Dorrell (i)	**46.6**	Richard Robinson	29.2	17.9	6.3
	minor boundary changes					
2005ADJ	-	46.6		28.5	18.3	5.9
2010ADJ	Stephen Dorrell (i)	**49.6**	Eric Goodyer	19.7	19.7	9.2

Table 1.14 : Independent in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest

	KHHC cand.	KHCC%	Lab candidate	Lab%	Con candidate	Con%	LD%	Oth %
1997	-	-	DA Lock	**48.8**	A Coombs (i)	36.1	8.0	7.2
2001	RT Taylor	**58.1**	DA Lock (i)	22.1	M Simpson	19.1	DNS	0.8
2005	RT Taylor (i)	**39.9**	M Bayliss	22.8	MRT Garnier	28.7	DNS	8.6
2010	RT Taylor (i)	31.7	N Knowles	14.3	MRT Garnier	**36.9**	11.9	5.1

Table 1.15/1.16: Changing Parties

Caithness & Sutherland

	Lab Candidate	Lab%	Lib/SDP/Lib Dem	Lib%	Con %	SNP %
1964	John B Urquart	30.2	GY Mackie	**36.1**	20.8	
1966	R Maclennan	**39.1**	GY Mackie (i)	38.8	21.9	
1970	R Maclennan (i)	**36.7**	GY Mackie	25.4	22.3	15.4
1974-F	R Maclennan (i)	**36.1**	M Burnett	26.2	21.5	16.1
1974-O	R Maclennan (i)	**33.9**	M Burnett	24.3	19.2	24.3
1979	R Maclennan (i)	**41.4**	no candidate		30.5	27.9
1983	D Carrigan	14.2	R Maclennan (i) ?	**52.0**	22.6	11.0
1987	A Byron	14.9	R Maclennan (i)	**53.7**	16.7	10.3
1992	M Coyne	15.6	R Maclennan (i)	**45.1**	20.9	18.2

Kingswood (Labour candidate throughout was Terry Walker)

	Con Candidate	Con%	Lib Candidate	Lib%	Lab%	Oth%
1970-not.		52.8			47.2	
1974-F	CG Irving	35.3	Jack Aspinwall	26.0	**38.7**	
1974-O	David Hunt	38.5	Jack Aspinwall	17.5	**44.0**	
1979	Jack Aspinwall	**45.4**	A Wilson	9.3	44.8	0.5

Chapter 2 - Literature Review Part One

Introduction

The literature review has been divided into two sections. The first is a diachronic analysis of how academics have viewed and studied incumbency and the methodologies undertaken. The second part, chapter three, focuses in detail on some of the factors that are said to be the reasons for incumbency and for the change in the increase of the incumbency factor over the study. Thus, chapter two explains what the literature says about the *what is* and *how much* questions about incumbency, whilst chapter three explains what the literature says about the *how* and *why* questions. Both chapters heavily cite US literature. The reason for doing so is that there are relatively few large-scale studies of the UK and indeed other analogous Westminster systems such as Canada, which also use first past the post and have single member districts. Whilst Congressional elections are clearly different in that they do not affect the makeup of the Administration, the similarity in the two-party system, the single member districts and similar role in representational terms means that there are analogous enough for sensible comparisons to be made and lessons learned (Cain and Ferejohn, 1981).

Study of incumbency advantage is a relatively new phenomenon, prior to the 1960s in the US, and 1970s in the UK, there was virtually no interest in it whatsoever, or indeed in candidate/personality effects more generally. This needs to be seen in the context of the fact that there was actually very little academic study of politics as a social science in general. Hayward and Norton (1986), and Cain et al. (1987) point out that prior to the Second World War, politics was generally not considered a subject in its own right, it falling into other subjects such as philosophy, (political) history or economics, and there was little or no concept of political science. Another factor worth bearing in mind is the fact that data analysis was an extremely laborious process prior to early computers in the 1960s and more recent advances in the study of statistics such as regression analysis. David Butler appeared in early editions of the BBC results programmes saying that his team of assistants would analyse the results with slide rules (BBC, 1964).

In addition to the fact that the subject was not consistently studied, there also a consensus amongst academics that the personal vote was either non-existent, or small enough not to make a material impact on elections. Elections in the US, (excluding the idiosyncratic South), and the UK were seen as national events in which local factors in general were irrelevant. This consensus is usually referred to as the *Michigan Model*. For the UK, the post war orthodoxy can be summarized by the following quote from David Butler and Donald Stokes:

> *It has long been suggested that at least in General Elections. The personality of the local candidate makes very little difference to the voters... ...The name is all that most voters know about their candidates. Despite all the efforts that some MPs make to communicate their personal stand on the issue, very little seems to reach down to their constituents (Butler and Stokes, 1974)*

Sir Ivor Jennings, writing in 1939, set the tone for the UK post-war view. He argued that not only were candidate effects very limited, that there were so few seats that it could make a difference that it wasn't worth considering. He claimed a good candidate could win 500 extra votes, whereas a poor candidate could lose the same. Thus there were many constituencies that could not be lost, however incompetent the candidate. He did concede though that MPs who thought they might be vulnerable could put in extra work (Jennings, 1939).

From the late 1960s in the US, political scientists began to notice that incumbent members of the House of Representatives appeared to be outperforming new candidates from their party in so-called open seats in which the incumbent had stood down, or been defeated in a primary. Additional work showed that this incumbency advantage appeared to have increased in the 1960s, and was also enjoyed by other legislators such as the US Senators and members of state legislatures. Investigating this incumbency advantage became what one author described as a 'cottage industry' and the practice and methodologies used in US studies were adapted for use in the UK and other countries such as Canada and Australia who use single member majoritarian methods of electing their legislature.

2.1 Post War view – elections as national events with no room for personality effects

Nuffield Study of the 1945 Election

The first academic study of a UK general election was produced by Nuffield College Oxford. It was authored by Ronald McCallum and Alison Readman and contained a statistical appendix analysing the results by David Butler, then a student. The series known as the Nuffield Studies, always titled; *The British General Election of ----,* has been produced at every election since, and authored or edited by David Butler from 1951 until 2005. Although the volumes provide an invaluable resource for those studying early post-war elections, the statistical analysis was somewhat varied and lack the systematic techniques of more recent volumes, the most complex calculations had to be conducted using slide rules. The other key issue prior to 1970s was that the Nuffield Study and its author, David Butler completely dominated the study of elections with very few others attempting such work. Butler, along with Robert McKenzie also dominated broadcast media analysis of the results, playing key roles on the BBC election night coverage at all elections from 1951 to 1979. Thus, its not entirely surprising that the Butler/Nuffield College view that personality or incumbency effects were irrelevant was so easily to become received wisdom.

This first Nuffield Study, *The British General Election of 1945* McCallum and Readman (1947), barely mentioned incumbency as a factor, and rebuked any view that candidates matter. Like all the later Nuffield Studies, there was a chapter on the candidates and an analysis of the results at the end. There was a significant analysis of the candidates, their background and education, and

noting that unlike in the US, candidates were a mix of local men and strangers. However, the authors argue that:

> *"Despite some reasons to believe beforehand that the new electors, voting for the first time in their lives, and older electors, voting for the first time in ten years, might for once have been influenced by personal appeals, and by the merits of various types of experience and competence in the candidates placed before them. No doubt many were so influenced, but it seems in the end to cancel out. Voters voted not so much for the man, as for the side."*

McCallum and Readman also wrote a chapter about independent candidates. Since a number had been elected during the war at by-elections, partly due to an inter-party truce, there were an unusually large number of independent candidates and indeed a few sitting independent MPs. The authors dismissed the logic of voting for an independent, arguing that "*electing an independent, is like taking a wicket with a no-ball*." They also asserted that voters were irritated even with having to choose between three candidates, never mind a fourth, and that in any case, voters wanted to make their votes count and so eschewed the opportunity to vote for independents.

David Butler's appendix on the results of the first Nuffield Study in 1947 was ground breaking, and many of the themes from the chapter have been repeated in later volumes. The chapter analysed regional variation in the swing from the Conservatives to Labour, the breakdown of rural and urban seats, and looked at the operation of votes to seats. It argued that criticism that the voting system was capricious and could easily result in a party with fewer votes gaining more seats was actually incorrect. Once the mal-apportionment caused by changes in population during the war was taken into account, the system should not have a bias either way of more than 1 to 2%. The study concluded that based on the 1935 results, so long as either of the two parties had been 1% ahead in in terms of share of the vote ahead of the other, that party would have won. On the 1945 results, (the Conservatives), would have needed to be 3% ahead to have won due to the effects of the war on the population. The discussion of how the system operates in terms of converting votes to seats is a feature of all of Butler's Nuffield Studies.

Missing from the 1945 Election analysis section was any discussion of whether candidates, incumbents, or retirements had made any impact. The only acknowledgement of any such effect was in their description of Birmingham, which had seen one of the largest swings to Labour in the country. They noted that under the influence of the two Chamberlains in 1935, the entire city had been Conservative, but with both gone, the city saw a twenty-three per cent swing.

"Birmingham, in the days before 1886, the days of young Joseph Chamberlain, was a very radical city, but it followed its hero into Liberal Unionism over the Irish Question and ended up as plainly Conservative. His two eminent sons, Austin and Neville, have now gone, and in any case might have had little power to withstand the inrush of radicalism natural to a great industrial city in these days."

The concept of an entire city, (especially Birmingham), being under the influence of an individual political family seems pretty unlikely to students of current politics, but this short passage does indicate that the authors saw some kind of effect, perhaps one that had now been assigned to history. So whilst they ignore focus on individual incumbents, they do appear interested in providing an explanation as to why there was such an enormously large change in Birmingham from 1935 to 1945.

1950s Nuffield Studies

The Nuffield Study of the 1950 election, (Nicholas and Butler, 1951), was authored by H.G. Nicholas, who left responsibility for the results appendix to David Butler. Butler expanded the analysis and looked at several other factors overlooked in 1945. As before, swing and bias in the electoral system were calculated and assessed, on the latter; Butler concluded that the Conservatives had a more efficient distribution of votes, and that Labour wasted a large number of votes in super safe seats. He noted that the so call "cube law" which calculated the winner's bonus had somewhat broken down for 1950, because of Labour's inefficiency in terms of vote distribution, having won 18 fewer seats than would have been expected. The chapter also looked at turnout and noted its uniformity other than in a few super safe seats such as South Kensington and Chelsea. However, the 1950 volume is a disappointment in terms of looking for analysis of the effects of candidates or incumbency, Butler does not mention it at all.

Butler (1952) in his analysis of the 1951 results analysis produces the first attempt to make any mathematical analysis of incumbency effects within the results. Butler attempts, what he admits to be a pretty arbitrary check, to test retirement effects. He looked at the mean Labour to Conservative swing in the seats of twelve retiring Labour MPs, it was found to be 0.4% higher in these seats, but was also 0.4% higher in seventeen seats in which Conservative MPs retired, so that the Tories had done better in seats where their own incumbents retired. Butler argued that this contradictory result indicated that there was no personal vote. One could criticise this on the grounds that with such a small sample, it might make more sense to test it against regional swing or indeed take account of other factors such as Liberal intervention or not. However, having said that, it was the first attempt that anyone appears to have made to assess the effects of incumbency at all. In the candidates chapter, Butler looks at the education, occupation, gender of candidates, as in 1950 and 1945, and also looks at the religion of candidates. It is a measure of how much things have changed, that Methodists and other non-conformist Protestants are treated as being sufficiently exotic, alongside Jews and Catholics, to have had their numbers and breakdown by party noted. Butler noted that non-Anglicans were much more likely to be selected by the Labour party. Unfortunately, there was not any analysis as to whether these non-Anglican candidates performed any better or worse.

Butler (1955) was the first time that an affirmative answer was given about incumbent candidates making a difference. Butler's analysis of the 1955 results

stated that sitting MPs had a small but appreciable advantage over new candidates. Two pieces of evidence were taken into account for this. Firstly, Butler pointed out that the median swing in Conservative seats (to the Conservatives), was higher than the swing in Labour held seats, 1.5% v 1.2%, Butler said that this could be due to incumbency effects. However, one could argue that this is rather flawed, and the reason for this could be that Conservative areas were getting relatively more Conservative, whilst Labour areas were getting relatively more Labour. With the advantage of fifty years hindsight, we can safely say that that was the case, the 1950s saw the start of a trend in which the nation became more polarized, especially on a north/south axis. Butler then compares seats in which there was a retirement for each party against the median swing, finding that retirements were significant, with a 2.2% median swing to the Conservatives where a Labour MP stood down, and a 0.7% median swing where a Conservative stood down. Butler concludes that a personal vote would be worth around 300 votes, significant, but very small. This became the orthodox view amongst political researchers for some considerable time.

Another innovation in the 1955 results analysis was a test to see if candidate/MP ideology had any impact. Butler tested to see if MPs and fresh candidates who were associated with Aneuran Bevan did any better. There had been some claims that these candidates might actually do better than more moderate colleagues by inspiring left wing Labour voters to come out and vote. It is worth noting that this analysis came two years before the publication, of Anthony Downs' seminal work *Theory of Economic Voting (Downs, 1957),* which suggests that more extreme candidates would do badly if voters' preferences are distributed normally. With the exception of a rare Communist candidate, Labour MPs would be unlikely to face a more left wing challenge, and so one might well expect Bevanite candidates to have actually done worse from a Downs model analysis of political competition. Butler did find that the swing to the Conservatives was higher, 1.6% v 1.2%, where a Bevanite stood in a Labour seat, but Butler concluded that it had was an insignificant rather than a negative factor.

The analysis of the 1959 results, Butler and Rose (1960), is similar to the 1955 report, suggesting that there was only a small advantage for incumbency. Butler writes:

> *On the whole there is little comfort in the figures for those who believe that many voters are swayed by organization, or that the local member has a special pull.*

The methodology applied was pretty similar to that of 1955, looking at median swings in seats in which the sitting Labour or Conservative member stood down. Where Labour MPs stood down, the swing to Conservative was 1.3% higher than the median, in seats where Conservative sitting members stood down; there was no difference in swing with seats in which the sitting member re-stood. The other set of swings tested was in marginal seats, Butler found that in Conservative held marginal constituencies the swing was higher at 1.7% v 1.0%

in Labour held marginal constituencies, he suggests that this may be due to the local pull of the member. Once again, this analysis may have been flawed due to the slow trend of polarization that was taking place through the period, even in more marginal seats, it is plausible suggest that those in the South were getting more Conservative and those in the North more Labour.

The 1959 analysis also looked for evidence that improvements in party organization could affect results. Butler's methodology was to look at seats in which the Conservative and Labour HQ's had noticed an improvement in their party's local organization.[15] However, there was no big difference in the results, with Conservative improved seats having a miniscule increase in swing of 0.2%, and Labour improved seats having a 0.2% increased swing to the Conservatives, (i.e. In the wrong direction). With no apparent sense of irony and as per all previous editions, the 1959 volume contains detailed analysis of the local fights in several individual constituencies, despite the analysis claiming such matters made no difference to the final results.

Nuffield Studies 1964 – October 1974

Whilst the 1950s and 1970s each had four general elections, there were only two in the 1960s, those of 1964 and 1966. At the 1964 election David Butler relinquished the statistical appendix of the Nuffield Studies to Michael Steed, who was the sole author of the statistical analysis from 1964 until October 1974. Steed made his own views on incumbency clear in a *Spectator* article previewing the 1966 election. He said that whilst in a few cases, MPs appeared to defy the rules, that very few people voted for a candidate rather than a party, and that in some cases, elderly MPs who had outstayed their welcome could become a hindrance.

In Nuffield's Studies' empirical work, the change of author led to a change in methodology. In order to tackle the problem of irregular Liberal interventions and withdrawals, Steed changed the swing methodology used in the results analysis chapter excluding Liberal and minor party candidates, measuring two-party swing. This was particularly acute at the 1964 election as Liberals fought over half the seats (365), more than trebling their candidates since 1959. This two-party swing methodology is sometimes known as *Steed swing.*

Steed (1965), writing the appendix on the 1964 election, tested a number of factors related to the candidate, but unlike in previous volumes did not attempt to provide a numerical estimate for the difference it might have made. He found a slight outperformance in 1964 where a new Conservative MP had previously replaced a Labour member at the 1959 election, (i.e. A double incumbency), and found very slight evidence of discrimination against new Labour female candidates, and Labour left-wingers. There was also evidence of a small retirement effect such that when an MP stood down their party suffered slightly. Butler and King (1965) in the results summary dismissed this as very small.

Another Steed finding was that the Parliamentary voting behaviour of the sitting MP was seen to have had a small effect. Conservative MPs who were seen as

rebels and had voted with the Opposition outperformed slightly, although there was no such effect seen for Labour rebels. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare with past or future studies as the estimated swing difference or the significance t-statistics are not supplied. However, this is the first time in the literature that independent minded MPs were seen to have achieved any kind of advantage. Steed found very limited impact from the issue of immigration other than in Slough, Southall, Smethwick and two other constituencies in the West Midlands.

The 1966 methodology was similar to the 1964 approach, Steed (1966) assessing a number of candidate and incumbency factors to see if they made any difference to the two party swings. There appeared to be an impact from MPs deviating from their parties on votes about Rhodesia, on capital punishment or immigration; there was no significant difference to the swing based on the incumbent MP's voting record. Steed did note an apparent retirement effect in that when sitting Conservative MPs stood down, the swing to Labour was higher; Steed estimated this at 250 votes. Butler in the results summary stated that a personal vote might have saved a number of Tory MPs, including the leader of the Opposition Ted Heath. This is interesting because Heath had held on by 2,333 votes, much more than the 250 votes that Steed and Butler himself had previously estimated. Butler's argument was that the four other Tory seats in the area that had been as marginal as Bexley in 1950, were all now Labour seats, so there is a partial acceptance that the personal vote could be more in some circumstances. Steed's other finding was that there was apparently a small double incumbency effect such that first time Labour MPs in seats which had been Conservative until 1964, outperformed their peers in their 1966 re-election, winning a 4.1% two-party swing versus 2.9% for other Labour MPs.

Steed (1971) in his results analysis chapter finds some evidence of incumbency, double incumbency and retirement effects. The mean two party swing was taken in the seats of the two major parties, where there was a retiring MP, where there was a first-term incumbent having taken over from an incumbent of the same party in 1966, and finally the 43 seats, which Labour had gained from the Conservatives in 1966, and in the twelve by-elections the Conservatives had made since 1966, compared with 1966.

Steed's 1970 estimates of incumbency effects

	Seats	Two-party swing to Con	Additional Con Vote*
Labour gain in 1966	43	3.8	-405
Labour first term inc'bent	19	4.3	-180
Con retirement	27	4.5	-90
Mean national swing		4.7	
Labour retirement	51	5.0	135
Con first term incumbent	19	5.3	270
Con by election gain	12	6.8	945

** This author's calculation based on average vote in each constituency at 45000*

With the exception of the by-election gains and the double incumbency from 1966, the effects in terms of number of votes are pretty derisory and below the 300 that Butler gives for 1959. The numbers can be doubled with respect to the winner's majority, but the idea that a retirement would reduce a Conservative majority by 180 votes would not have worried anyone. Steed also looked at sitting MPs and candidates who were known for having strong view on immigration or the EEC and found no convincing evidence that either had been significant. He noted that in the three constituencies which had seen a pro-Tory swing on immigration issues in 1964 which was not reversed in 1966; Smethwick, Eton & Slough, and Southall, had three of the lowest swings in the country in 1970, averaging at 1.6%, and suggested that local controversies over immigration might be short lived. Steed concludes that:

> *The results of 1970 fully support the evidence of previous elections that candidate's views very seldom matter.*

The results analysis appendices of the two 1974 elections have no systematic analysis of incumbency affects. For the February 1974 election, Steed (1974) mentions anecdotal evidence of a double incumbency effect in that four of the nine constituencies in England, which showed pro-Tory swings; Hampstead, Falmouth & Camborne, Gloucester, and Dover & Deal were seats which the Conservatives had picked up in 1970, defeating a Labour incumbent. He also mentions that the two rebel Labour MPs, Edward Milne and Dick Taverne, who clearly had enough of a following to hold their seats as independents. The result of William Whitelaw's big win in Penrith, which Steed claimed was 10% better than would have otherwise been expected, is also put down to his high profile.

On the October 1974 results analysis Steed (1975) compares the fortunes of the Conservatives in the 25 seats they lost in February. He shows that it made no difference to the vote whether or not they put up the defeated Conservative MP or put up a new candidate. Unfortunately for a student of incumbency effects, there was no analysis of how these twenty-five newly elected Labour MPs did in comparison to their peers. Steed looked at the apparent deviant results, claiming that there were a few of these which could not have been put down to tactical voting on the part of Liberal voters from earlier in the year switching. Instead, they may have been down to personal vote effects. He states that Charles Irving, (who had taken over from Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker), had improved his vote by 1.4%, perhaps due to a local following in Cheltenham, where he had been the mayor. He claimed the worst Conservative result, a drop of 7.7% in vote share in Louth, was likely to have been due to the high profile financial difficulties and resignation of the sitting MP Jeffrey Archer.

Ross (1953), looked at a specific candidate effect, that of whether female candidates suffered. He noted that there were complaints and indeed evidence that female candidates were far more likely to lose elections than the average male candidate, but concluded that it had nothing to do with sexism by voters. He found that there was no apparent gender bias by voters, nor the did the female percentage of the electorate in a given constituency make a difference to the prospect of a female candidate, although he did concur with the view that women were more likely to vote Conservative, whilst, men more inclined to Labour. He concluded that women were being treated unfairly in terms of selection by constituency associations who were not selecting them for winnable seats.

Williams (1967) compared the performances of "familiar MPs"; those sitting for eight years or more, and "newcomers" whom he described as being new candidates or MPs who had sat for less than eight years. He looked at the long term swings using an average of election pairs; 1950/64; 1951/64; 1950/66 and 1951/66, excluding seats, which had large changes in the boundary review between 1951 and 1955. His methodology can be criticized on the grounds that there are no controls for regions and during this period there was a significant trend in that the regionalization of voting, in that Labour areas became more Labour, and that Conservative areas became more Conservative, and so there could be a significant bias in the data (see section 4.2 <below>). He argued that the personal vote of familiar Conservatives would be worth around 2000 votes and familiar Labour MPs more than this; he also argued that the amounts for normal MPs could be more because the statistics would be distorted by a few very unpopular MPs. What is perhaps a little more convincing is the 1% drop in vote share observed when a familiar MP departed, but that would be more like 500 votes. Methodological problems aside, it was the first serious challenge to the orthodox thesis that MPs' personal votes were minimal.

2.2 Michigan model

The study of political science begun much earlier in the United States than the UK. The American Political Science Association was founded in 1903, nearly half a century before its British counterpart was founded in 1950. Likewise, whilst courses in politics, political science or government were taught in the US from the early twentieth century, politics departments at UK Universities did not really get started until the 1960s (Hayward and Norton, 1986). Despite this advantage, the US did not have an equivalent of the Nuffield Study, and there wasn't a large amount of literature on legislative elections (Brady et al., 2000b). In the late 1950 and start of the 1960s, an analysis invariably described as the "Michigan Model," emerged, it was largely written by four authors from the University of Michigan, Campbell, Converse, Stokes and Miller. The Michigan Model is a theory of voting behaviour that argues that individual voters' core cue is their attachment to party, which is formed over time, and originates from a variety of psychological and socioeconomic factors. The powerful party cue leaves little or no room for other possible factors such as incumbency.

Campbell et al. (1960), the first major work, *The American Voter*, mainly focussed on the Presidential election by using survey data compiled by the University for the 1952 and 1956 elections. The House and Senate elections for the 1952 and 1956 election do not get much attention from the authors who look mostly at President and party. However, the University of Michigan commissioned a large study of the 1958 Congressional election, which was the first such for a mid-term election. The key findings from this extensive study, relating to incumbency and the behaviour of Congress members are summarized in two articles; Stokes and Miller (1962) and Miller and Stokes (1963).

The key tenet of the Michigan model that voters partisan ID is their most important, perhaps only voting cue. At the 1958 House election, that 84% of registered voters voted in line with their party of registration,[16] with the proportion defecting to the other party at just 11%. (Stokes and Miller, 1962). These authors argued that the strength of party is shown by the failure of any third parties to break through, and indeed by the proportion of registered independents being just 5%. The authors stressed the point that the electorate has been often collectively very ignorant, for example, they show that at the 1958 election, fewer than half of voters could correctly state that the Democratic Party had controlled Congress for the previous two sessions, with more than a third saying they did not know and one-in-five incorrectly claiming it was the Republicans. They also claimed that the interview answers for why the voters supported one party or the other were seldom based on contemporary issues, with many being based on key issues from the times of the voter's formative years. Ignorance of many of the differences between the national parties, is matched, the authors say, by ignorance of what their own member of Congress is doing:

> *Far from looking over the shoulder of their Congressmen at the legislative game, most Americans are almost totally uninformed about legislative issues in Washington. At best, the average citizen may be said to have some general ideas how the country should be run, which he is able to use in responding to particular questions about what the Government ought to do.* (Miller and Stokes, 1963)

Additionally, they note that whilst voters may base their voting decision on party, their Congress member is seldom punished for breaking ranks, because voters are usually unaware of what they are actually doing in Congress:

> *Candidates who presented themselves as party men... ...immediately break ranks into a cacophony of blocs and individuals fulfilling their own definition of public good.* (Stokes and Miller, 1962)

Whilst rejecting the notion that voters would judge their representatives on their roll-call votes, the authors did attempt to ascertain whether their Congress member *behaved* as if they did. For example, they show that four-fifths of incumbent Congress members surveyed in the 1958 election study said that they thought that voting record mattered to voters. Despite this, they point to the fact

that voting with their constituents' views in mind might come with opportunity costs, since it might cause a conflict with their personal viewpoints or indeed pressure from their party group or even pressure from the Administration. Miller and Stokes were able to use some of the data in the 1958 election to measure how well Congress member's voting records in the 1957-8 session was compared with district preferences and with their own ideological preferences as ascertained from the 1958 interviews. They tested on three areas; Government intervention on social / economic issues (left/right); isolationism or interventionism in foreign policy; civil rights for African Americans. The results show that in the 1957-8 session, Congress members do not appear to have been very much influenced by their constituents' views, except perhaps on the explosive issue of race.

Correlation between voter attitudes and Congress member's voting record

Government intervention in social security	**0.3**
Government intervention in foreign policy	**-0.09**
African American civil rights	**0.6**

Correlation between Congress member's own attitude and voting record

Government intervention in social security	**0.7**
Government intervention in foreign policy	**0.6**
African American civil rights	**0.9**

Finally, on the value of incumbency, the only thing that the authors thought was important was name recognition. They argued that election time campaigning made little difference with 59% of surveyed voters in the 1958 study saying that they had nothing about either candidate and fewer than one in five saying that they had something about both candidates (Stokes and Miller, 1962).

Michigan model adapted for the UK by Butler and Stokes

The final piece of empirical research with the traditional view on voter preferences to be explored in this section is the Butler/Stokes *Political Change in Britain*, which was published in two volumes in 1969 and 1974. The two volumes used similar techniques to those used by the University of Michigan with survey data performed before and after the 1964 election, and then again in the second volumes, the 1970 election (Crewe, 1975). The purpose was to adapt the Michigan model for the UK's perceived class based politics and that is what was achieved (Epstein, 1970). The key importance of the work was that it was the first time in the UK, that political scientists had used surveys to look at individual level data as opposed to the macro data of general election results.

This UK version of the Michigan model argued that the traditional Conservative-Liberal cleavage, which collapsed after the First World War, led to the overwhelming majority of Liberal middle class voters going to the Conservatives, whilst a majority of working class Liberals moved to Labour. The Butler-Stokes model was also meant to be dynamic in the sense that it noted who social and

demographic changes would affect the electorate. For example, they concluded that Labour was slowly increasing its dominance of the working class vote, although that group's share of the population was in decline. The model also had a similar disdain for Liberal voters as the Michigan model had for independents. There was no chapter on the Liberals as the authors claimed they had little to add. Their message with regards to the importance of personality was similar to that of the US model, and was a continuation of Butler's own view that it did not matter. The authors stressed that pretty much all that voters could know about candidates was their name, and in any case, party identification and class cues would crowd out any personality effects.

2.3 The Revisionist View – Incumbency as an important voter cue

Revisionism in the US – debunking the Michigan Model

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was noticed that the advantage of House incumbents appeared to be growing and new studies were done which challenged the Michigan orthodoxy (Fiorina, 1977a). The Michigan model held that any name recognition that voters had of their incumbent Congress member or challenger would be positive and assist them. The revisionist authors became dissatisfied with this, arguing that the reputation of the Congress member was critical. As Cain et al. (1987) ask, *who on earth would want name recognition if it was on the grounds that they were infamous for incompetence*?

A number of papers attempting to debunk the Michigan model and provide answers as to why incumbency had increased were written, and these also provided new answers as to where the incumbency bonus might have come from in the first place. Similarly, the apparent decline in the numbers of marginal seats and decline in the swing ratio, noted by Erikson (1972), and Mayhew (1974b), were also assessed, with incumbency and its various effects investigated as the cause of this. Several themes emerged, sometimes championed by a single author. The critical themes discussed were; *partisan de-alignment* (Cover, 1977) and (Burnham, 1975)*; Congress member's position taking* (Erikson, 1971) and (Mayhew, 1974b); *co-operative gerrymandering by incumbents* (Erikson, 1972) and (Tufte, 1973); *Congress member's use of the perks of office* (Mayhew, 1974b); c*onstituency service and new breed of Congress member* (Abramowitz, 1975) (Fiorina, 1977a), *Congress members adjusting their style of representation to suit the constituency* (Fenno, 1978); *candidate quality / incumbent scare-off* (Cox and Katz, 1996). The next section will explore the increase in the value of incumbency and whilst Chapter 3 <below> runs through the proposed sources of incumbency.

Slurge, Gelman-King and methodology from election data in the US

Methodologies in the studies have varied, but the so-called "slurge" measure is generally considered to be the 'standard' one for House elections. Erikson (1971) defines slurge as the mean of the "retirement slump" (the incumbent party's underperformance in districts where the incumbent stands down), and the so-called "sophomore surge", [17] the outperformance that first term

incumbents are seen to receive as they work hard to entrench themselves. Jacobson (2000) argued that the retirement slump is a biased estimator to the topside, since the Congress member retiring might be doing so because the situation has deteriorated and they expect to otherwise lose, whilst the sophomore surge is biased to the downside, since the new member might expect to build some additional incumbency benefit at subsequent elections, and so he argues the mean of the two is a good estimate.

Erikson's 1971 article was the first well cited attempt to look at the slurge effect over a number of elections. He tested pairs of elections from 1952/54 to 1958/60, looking at House elections excluding the South.[18] During the four cycles, in 73% of cases, the incumbent was re-elected at the first election and re-stood at the second; in 9% of cases the incumbent re-elected at the first election stood down at the second election; in 10% of cases, a non incumbent defeated another non incumbent [open seat] and re-stood at the second election; in 7% of cases a non-incumbent unseated the previous incumbent at the first election, and re-stood at the second election [double incumbency]; 2% did not fit into this due to special elections etc. All except the special election cases were run as a regression with the dependent variable being the incumbent party's vote share at the second election.

The retirement slump estimated at 2.2% and the sophomore surge estimated at 1.7% for first termers who had won an open seat, but only 1.5% for a first termer who had won a seat from the opposition (double incumbent). Erikson stated that this was a surprise since at the second election the party who had lost the seat at the previous election would lose their incumbency advantage whilst the new incumbent of the other party would build his own advantage, thus perhaps doubling the effect. Erikson pointed to the 1958 election as the spoiler here, large Democrat gains due had been made at the expense of what Erikson described as unusually weak or complacent GOP incumbents in what were supposed to have been safe GOP seats, when the party got its act together in these districts at the 1960 election, there was a reversal of fortunes making the Democrats' sophomore surge smaller. Excluding the Democrats' 1958 gains, the sophomore surge in cases of double incumbency was estimated to be 3.2%. Erikson estimated that for the 1954-60 elections that as an approximate mean of the 1.7% sophomore surge and 2.2% retirement slump, 2% was a good estimate of the value of incumbency in the 1950s.

Erikson (1972), came back with a second article showing that the size of the incumbency bonus and specifically the sophomore surge had increased significantly in the 1960s. Democrats had made significant gains at the 1964 election, almost as much as they had done in 1958, partly due to the GOP Presidential candidate Goldwater's unpopularity, but at the 1966 election, unlike in 1960, newly elected Democrats in formerly Republican seats outperformed, with mainly otherwise inexplicably holding on against the tide. First time Democrats as a group saw their vote share decline just 2.9% versus a national Republican tide of 6%, showing a (relative) surge of 3.1%. In 1968 the sophomore surge for both parties appeared to rise to above 5%, with veteran Congress members also outperforming, as if catching up with the newer

members who had been experiencing larger first time bonuses Erikson (1972), and later articles showed that this had continued to grow in the 1970s and 1980s, to a peak of 8.5% (Jacobson, 2009).

The slurge methodology has been challenged, for example, by Canadian authors, Krashinsky and Milne (1993), who argue that there is no intuitive reason that additional incumbency advantage shouldn't accrue after the sophomore surge, although perhaps with diminishing returns, although their view is not widely shared by US authors. Gelman and King (1990), look at the method of estimating the advantage of incumbency, stating that there are statistical as well as practical biases in the slurge method. They reject Erikson's argument that the downside bias in the sophomore surge, and upside bias in the retirement slump cancel one another out. They say that theoretically, this would be only be the case if the incumbency advantage is zero, if it is anything other than zero, then these two biases will not cancel out, assuming a real incumbency advantage of 0.1, (i.e. 10%), the overall bias will be to the downside as the underestimate from the sophomore surge will be greater than the upside bias from the retirement slump. They propose an alternative measure (which has been called the Gelman-King Index by other authors such as Jacobson (2000)), which simply estimates the value of incumbency from a regression on the change in vote share in each district from one election to the next.

$$E(V_2) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 V_1 + \beta_2 P_2 + \psi I_2 + \epsilon$$

(Gelman and King, 1990)

Where, V is the Democrat proportion of the vote at elections 1 and 2; P is the winning party, (1) if Democrat (-1) if Republican; I is the incumbency status; (1) if Democrat, (0) if open seat, (-1) if Republican; and φ is the estimate for the value of incumbency. The authors suggest that theoretically P_1 (i.e. party control at the first election), could be inserted as an additional control, but they say that it did not make any material difference to their calculations. Like the slurge method, this is effectively a binary model since it separates out incumbents from non-incumbents, with no discrimination from length of service, however, it does remove some of the problems of looking at the sophomore surge number only.

Their 1990 article tests election data from 1900 to 1988, excluding any uncontested seats and do not perform the tests on any elections after decennial re-apportionment, e.g. 1962, 1982. The estimates of ψ from 1900 to 1988, showed a similar pattern to the slurge methodology with a large increase from the mid 1960s into the 1970s and 1980s. The 1900-1960 figures were higher than the slurge estimates, suggesting that there was an incumbency advantage of at least 1-2% as early as 1900, the authors stress that this is important as it knocks out some of the claims made by a few authors that there was not any kind of incumbency advantage until the post war period. Jacobson (2009), recalculates the incumbency estimates for later elections, using the slurge and Gelman-King methodologies and provides the following:

Estimates of ψ for US Congress members 1946 - 2006

	Slurge	Gelman-King
1946-64	1.6%	2.2%
1966-84	7.2%	8.2%
1986-90	8.5%	10.6%
1990-2006	5.8%	8.3%

There was a surprise coda to this story, indeed during the course of this PhD thesis, it was noted that the tide of incumbency advantage which had built up since the 1950s, had started to ebb. Jacobson (2015), noted that the elections from 2008 to 2014 had witnessed big declines in incumbency advantage using both the GKI and slurge methods of measuring it. Jacobson noted that at the 2014 election, incumbency advantage had dropped to as little as 3.5% of the vote, the lowest experienced since the 1950s. He noted a re-nationalization of Congressional elections in that there was less deviation from national and regional swings than at recent elections, reversing some of the trend the other way in the 1960s and 1970s.

Geographical polarization and decline in marginal seats

The decline in the number of the marginal seats has been an important factor in the incumbency debate, there is an agreement that since the 1940s there has been a big decline in the proportion of seats considered marginal. However, there is considerable debate about what should be considered as a marginal seat, Abramowitz et al. (2006) define it as a House race, which is decided by less than 10% of the vote, Gross and Garand (1984) define a marginal seat as one where the winner receives less than 60% of the two-party (DEM+GOP) vote, whilst Jacobson (1987), claims such definitions are arbitrary and misleading. The second issue is whether the decline in marginal districts has been caused by the increase in the incumbency effect, whether it is caused by the same processes which have also caused the increase in incumbency, whether it has come from incumbent's own behaviour in colluding with one-another to fix the boundaries, or indeed if comes from other factors which are not at all related to incumbency. Written just before the trio of landslide House elections of 2006, 2008 and 2010, Abramowitz et al. (2006), present a summary of the apparent decline in marginal seats (i.e. those won by less than a 10% vote margin):

Proportion of Marginal seats 1946 - 2004

1946 - 50	22%
1952 - 60	21%
1962 - 70	17%
1972 - 80	16%
1982 - 90	12%
1992 - 2000	15%
2002 - 2004	7%

Comparison of House and Senate incumbent advantages

Senators have a significantly lower re-election rate than Congress members, there appear to be a number of explanations for this, and some of these arguments appear to validate some of the arguments made for the House incumbency. The lower Senate re-election rate suggests that Senate incumbency is less potent than House incumbency. The Senate incumbency factor is generally considered to be smaller than that of the House, for example, Krashinsky and Milne (1993) find that post the 1968 election, House incumbency was worth at least 10%, whilst Senate incumbency was around 6%. A study by Hibbing and Brandes (1983) showed that between 1946 and 1980 that whilst re-standing House incumbents won on average 62.8% of the two party vote, (whether re-elected or not), re-standing Senate incumbents won just 57.4%. From 1946-2006, whilst the House incumbent re-election rate never fell below 79%, the Senate re-election rate fell as low as 55% in 1980 and was below the House re-election rate in all but five of the thirty-one elections, 1976 was a tie at 88%, (Jacobson, 2009).

There have been a number of additional observations such as Hinckley (1980), who shows that voters just seem to like their Representatives more than their Senators. Using the 1978 National Election Survey's voter thermometer ratings (0 poor; 100 excellent), she finds that voters rate their House incumbents very well at a mean of 68.9, versus a mean of 61.3 for Senate incumbents. However, Senate challengers are rated better at 56.5 than House challengers at a very lukewarm 51.3 (52.3 for House challengers in open seats), thus there is a small ratings gap between the Senate incumbent and his challenger than is the case in the House race. Using the same survey, Mann and Wolfinger (1980), show that the contact-gap (% incumbent contacted – % challenger contacted), is much smaller in Senate races across pretty much categories. For example, the gaps for *mail contact* are +41% for the House and +21% for the Senate, the gap for *saw at a meeting* are +17% against +5% and for *any contact* +46% against +12%. All of this is good evidence that Senators face a very much harder time of it in terms of re-election.

Hibbing and Brandes (1983) suggest it makes sense to group the reasons for the lower Senate re-election rate into *institutional* issues; Senators face better challengers, are less able to distance themselves from explosive issues, and after a six-year term face more scrutiny from the public; and *constituency* issues such

as the fact that states can be more heterogeneous than districts, population of constituencies in larger states means Senators cannot effectively do Fiorina's constituency service or Fenno's home style and that heavily populated states can be very good grounds for media campaigns whilst arranging TV advertising for a district could be difficult. These authors argue that the nature of the constituency is what is most important; they attempt to prove this by testing size of constituency against the electoral performance. At the time of the article, Alaska, Delaware, Nevada, North Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming had only one House member, which meant that the constituencies for House and Senate were the same, i.e. statewide. If the constituency issues were dominant then one would expect Senate incumbents to do better in these small states than in the large ones. Using data from the 1946 – 1980 elections, they tested vote share of re-standing incumbents against the size of the state controlling for the partisan competitiveness of the state. Competitiveness was defined by the mean Democrat share of the two-party vote in all House elections from 1946 folded at 50%, such that a Democrat vote of 80% or 20% would indicate an equal amount of one-sidedness. Competitiveness was obviously highly significant; the size of the states was also significant, such that an extra 500,000 reduces the expected incumbent vote share by 0.17%. Comparing similarly competitive Vermont with New York, the expected re-election share of an incumbent in the Green Mountain State would be 61.91% versus just 54.97% in the Empire State. Their results are also robust when region is added into the equation, with the South behaving in the same manner. One could argue that the linearity of the equation doesn't make a huge amount of sense intuitively; there might be a diminishing return to the large state penalty, perhaps with diminishing returns. An alternative approach might be to use the logarithm of the population of the state as the independent variable.

Hibbing and Alford (1990) used individual level data from the 1988 National Election Survey, which was un-weighted by state size and designed for the US Senate rather than the 1978 NES which was more aimed at the House. They tested voters' answers to a number of issues about Senators against the size of their state to assess difference that the size of the constituency made. On outright job-description, when voters were asked which was more important, constituency service, national issues or pork barrel funding, those in small states were much more inclined to say the latter, whilst those in big states were inclined to national issues. There was no significant difference between large and small states on the importance of constituency service by Senators. They also tested voters answers to questions about whether they had contact with the Senator or their campaign against the population of the state, unsurprisingly, that most of the variables including; had met the Senator personally, talked to a staff member, contacted the Senator personally, were all negative and significant. They say that common sense would indicate that this should be the case, but that the key question was whether voters would hold this against Senators in big states.

On the institutional arguments, Hinckley (1980), uses the 1978 NES to tease out some of the reasons why Senators might be doing worse than Congress members in the re-election stakes. Going back to Stokes & Miller's ideas about name

recognition she explores the differences in name recognition between House and Senate incumbents seeking re-election and also of their challengers. Hinckley argued that one of the key points was the fact that the Senate races were much more high profile than the House election, with Senate challengers faring much better in media attention and getting free publicity from media interviews. She shows, that at the 1978 election, 92% of voters were able to name and or offer a rating of the performance of their House incumbent against 44% for his challenger. However, whilst slightly more 95%, were able to name or offer a rating on an incumbent Senator re-standing, 85% were able to the same for his challenger, a very large difference. However, Hinckley does reject another institutional argument, that the public has different expectations about what Congress members and Senators should be doing. When the survey asked respondents to decide which of five possible roles Senators and Congress members should be doing, the numbers were surprisingly similar for both classes of legislator. She argues that one might expect the public to more likely to choose roles such as "look after people in the constituency who have personal problems with the Government" for Congress members, and "working in Congress on Bills concerning national issues" for Senators, the differences were actually very small indeed, with the public pretty much coming up with the same balance for each. She argues that this is evidence that rejects the idea that the public prefer their Congress member to their Senator because they judge the former on different roles, (e.g. constituency service), than those of their Senators.

Macro-election-data studies from Canada and India

A series of three articles by Krashinsky and Milne (1983, 1985, 1986),[19] seeks to use election data to investigate incumbency advantage in Canada. Like in the US and UK, Canada elects candidates in single member districts by simple plurality in its House of Commons, and also in state legislatures. These studies focus on the Canadian House of Commons and the provincial legislature of Ontario, the most populous province. The authors avoided Erikson's slurge method, arguing that they were not convinced that all the incumbency benefits would accrue at the first "sophomore" re-election. Canada, like the UK, has a multiparty system with the New Democrats as the third party equivalent to the UK Liberals, albeit much further to the left. The authors therefore treat each party separately and estimate incumbency advantages for each party by regression. The regression has the change in the party vote at each election in each constituency as the dependent variable, against; that party's vote at the previous election; whether that party has an incumbent MP standing in the constituency; and controls for region.

The authors found a major difference in incumbency advantage between Provincial and Federal elections. The size of the incumbency advantage for provincial legislators in the Ontario Assembly is estimated to be between 6 to 12%, whilst the mean advantage for members of the Canadian House of Commons over eight Federal elections from 1957-1980 is estimated to be around 3.5%. They concluded that the Ontario Assembly had a much more stable system with far smaller swings, and argued that the reason for the smaller incumbency factor in the House of Commons was due to the frequent instability

which crowded its importance out. They cited the fact that the Progressive Conservative MPs' incumbency advantage was estimated to be insignificant in the elections of 1957, and 1962, when there were huge swings towards and against the party, suggested that the value of incumbency was correlated with stability. However, as the final article on the 1984 Federal Election showed, incumbency remained very important, despite the huge 16.5% swing from Liberal to PC at the Federal election, the incumbency factor actually increased to above the 1957-80 means for all three major parties, (Liberal 5.2%; PC 4.7%; NDP 7.4%). They concluded that incumbency was a persistent factor in Canadian elections and should not be ignored.

India's system is often described as being anti-incumbent with an extremely low re-election rate, despite using the US/UK model of single member districts with a simple plurality rule of election. An analysis by Uppal (2009), at state level finds a significant anti-incumbency effect which itself appears to be correlated with a lack of public services. Uppal looks at all state legislative elections from 1975 to 2003, excluding the special case of Jammu and Kashmir, giving a massive data set of 24,592 elections and 220,726 individual candidate observations. His methodology uses "Regressional Discontinuity Design" eschewing the simpler slurge method of some of the earlier US literature on the grounds of potential bias, he also excludes races where the candidate defeats the next candidate by more than 70%, arguing that such races are effectively uncontested. His finds indicate a negative incumbency of 2.2% from 1975 to 1991 increasing to a disadvantage of 2.8% in the 1991 to 2003 period. In the second period, *ceteris paribus*, an incumbent is 22% less likely to be (re-) elected than a non-incumbent.

2.4 Nuffield Studies on incumbency 1979 – 2010

The 1979 election is a useful point to pick up the evolution of the Nuffield Study's attitude to the study of the importance of incumbency as it explicitly rejects the traditional view on incumbency, but also because at this election John Curtice joined Michael Steed to co-author the chapter and this meant that there was a change in emphasis. In their appendix analysis of the results, Curtice and Steed (1980) make the following explanation for incumbency:

"…because of the greater attention he can command in the media, and the constituency services he can render, an incumbent MP is more likely than a prospective parliamentary candidate to be able to establish a personal vote… "

The section also looks at the idea of double incumbency:

"Where an MP does build such a personal vote, that vote will be lost if he is defeated. If he does lose, by the time of the next election, the new MP may have acquired his own personal vote. The combined effect of these two personal votes would be a lower swing against the second incumbent at the following election."

Curtice and Steed (1980).

The method of the empirical work was similar to that used in earlier elections with the authors looking at the difference in the [Butler] swing from Labour to Conservatives in seats where there was a Labour incumbent and a Labour incumbent who had defeated a sitting Conservative MP in October 1974. They calculated that the incumbency effect was worth approximately 750 for straight incumbency and 1,500 votes for a double incumbency case. They also estimated that in the absence of this incumbency effect, Mrs Thatcher's overall majority would have been 60-65 instead of the 44 achieved. The authors also noted that black and Asian candidates did noticeably worse than might otherwise have been expected.

The 1983 election was complicated by the fact that over 40 Labour incumbents defected to the SDP, there was also a huge surge in votes to the SDP-Liberal Alliance, there were large boundary changes, and many other Labour incumbents were removed by the introduction of compulsory re-selection. Curtice and Steed (1984) did look at the effects of incumbency and double incumbency at the election, but did not find any strong significance and so there are no details of the methodology. They did, however, argue that there was anecdotal evidence of two MPs, Gwyneth Dunwoody and Ken Weetch surviving due to the local popularity, and that the SDP appeared to do worse against "good Labour MPs". The authors did look at the effects of an MP defecting from Labour to the SDP, finding that this boosted by the SDP by a mean of 7.7% of the vote, although only three, David Owen, Robert Maclennon and John Cartwright survived. They also looked at Liberal results from 1974 to 1983 estimating an incumbency advantage of 13-17% of the vote.

The 1987 election saw a 1.7% swing from Conservative to Labour, but only a net change of twenty seats, nine fewer than would have been expected on a uniform basis. Curtice and Steed (1988) focused their section on incumbency to Conservatives, looking at the double incumbency seats where the Conservatives had taken seats from Labour incumbents in 1983 and were now re-standing, and also in seats where the Conservative incumbent stood down. The methodology changed to examining the change in the Conservative share of the vote in such constituencies instead of the swing or two-party swing. They found that there was a double incumbency advantage worth 4% of the vote, which was likely to have saved the party six seats, which otherwise would have reverted to Labour. They also found a 1% retirement penalty for the Conservative vote in seats where the incumbent stood down.

For Labour, the authors looked at ideology and incumbency, finding new MP outperforming by 1.4%, whilst seeing a 1.2% penalty for an incumbent retirement. Controlling for incumbency, they tested if there was any differential performance amongst the 101 candidates named by the Alliance as being 'hard left'. They found there was absolutely no effect once incumbency was controlled. They also noted a 7.5% retirement penalty for Liberal/Alliance incumbents standing down and that the SNP vote fell 25% in the Western Isles where their incumbent Donald Stewart retired.

The 1992 election saw another swing from the Conservatives to Labour with the former's majority falling from 102 to 21. Curtice and Steed (1992) argued that at this election incumbency had not mattered because there had been a swing to Labour in 1987 and thus very few Conservative gains from Labour, and so very few MPs in marginal seats benefitting from the first time surge. They argued that perhaps only Battersea had been saved due to first time incumbency, but also said that there could have socio-demographic change at work. They argued:

The incumbency effect only matters in terms of seats at an election if the electoral tide is flowing [modestly] against the party which made significant gains at the previous election. So in 1996/7 will only matter if there is a swing from Labour to Conservatives.

They did, however, produce some quantitative estimates on Conservative MPs incumbency by comparing the party's vote share in the seats of the 57 retiring incumbents against the sub-regional average finding an overall penalty of 0.2% of the vote, but a 0.6% penalty in more marginal constituency. They nonetheless suggested that the retirements of two incumbents in Cheltenham and Cambridge may have cost the Government the seats. On the Labour, side they found that first time incumbents re-elected saw their vote share rise 1.7% more than existing incumbents and noted that some of the best results were in seats where high profile left-wingers newcomers who had been strongly attacked in 1987 were re-standing.

Curtice and Steed (1997) in their chapter on the 1997 election, make no direct reference to the incumbency effect for the first time since 1974. Given the scale of the Conservative defeat, losing 178 seats[20] and the unprecedented importance of tactical voting, which the authors say cost the party as many as 35 seats, incumbency was perhaps not a priority. However, there were an unprecedented number of retirements on the Conservative side, 72, as well as three deselections (Criddle, 1997), and so one might have thought that there would be an opportunity to explore the effect of this. The authors, whether they looked at it and found no effect, or simply did not look at it at all, do not mention it. They did look at candidate effects in terms of the performance of ethnic minority candidates and also on Eurosceptic Conservatives, finding no advantage for those taking a more hard-line position than their party.

Where the 1997 Nuffield Study ignored the incumbency factor, the 2001 edition, Curtice and Steed (2001) looked at it in some detail examining the results for each party separately. The authors noted straight away that there had been an unusual result in that all three parties had done very much better in seats in which they were defending, and so whilst there was a swing, very few seats changed hands. The methodology was still comparatively simple looking at means of change in votes for various categories of scenario. For example, for the Conservatives, seats where the MP retired are compared with seats where the incumbent restood, the authors finding a retirement penalty of 1.6% of the vote. The authors speculate that Tory MPs who had been in apparently pretty safe seats in 1992 but who then had only narrowly survived in 1997 might have changed their behaviour in the 1997 – 2001 Parliament, to focus more on

servicing their constituency, making incumbency advantage more important. For the Liberal Democrats the authors tested both sides of the slump-surge effect, finding a 4.9% retirement penalty for a retiring incumbent and a 6.3% surge for an incumbent restanding for the first time.

For Labour there was a very large number of new MPs, most in gains from the Conservatives, but some who had replaced Labour retirees from 1997. As well as looking at the double incumbency effect where the new Labour MP was re-standing, having defeated a Conservative incumbent, there were enough seats, 12, where the previous Conservative tried to win the seat back in 2001 making it viable to see if this made a difference. They found the following results:

Seat Type	%-Change in Labour vote 2001
Labour seat gained from a Conservative 1997	**-0.1**
" " & the Conservative MP re-stands in 2001	**-0.5**
Seat Lab in 1992 - new Labour MP in 1997	**-1.5**
Same MP 1992 - 2001 – re-stands	**-4.1**
Labour MP standing down in 2001	**-5.7**

So whilst the Labour vote fell on average in all types of Labour held seat, nationally it fell 4%, it fell least in seats where the party had made gains from the Conservatives in 1997. There is a slight glimmer of evidence that the Conservative re-treads might have made a difference with the Labour vote falling slightly more in such seats, but only one former MP, Henry Bellingham, managed to regain his seat. The figures are also means and not from a regression with any controls and so one could argue there was a selection bias since Labour appeared to do its best in 2001 in suburbs which have tended to be the areas hosting large numbers of battleground seats against the Conservatives, rather than in safe inner cities where the vote fell more, or safe Conservative shire counties where the Lib Dems were the main challenger. Therefore, without controls the size of the first term advantage needs to be taken with caution. That said, first term incumbents in seats it had held in 1992, also did a lot better, 2.6%, than continuing Labour MPs in 1992 held seats and so there clearly was quite a large incumbency bonus operating. The 1.6% retirement penalty appears to be in line with estimates, which previous studies had produced.

Curtice et al. (2005) concentrated on the distortions caused by the opposition to the Iraq War in their analysis of the 2005 results. There was an extremely peculiar result that the change in the Conservative and Labour votes was very slightly positively cross correlated (+0.06; +0.01) on both constituency specific and regional basis, thus suggesting no direct Labour to Conservative swing. Meanwhile the change in the two major parties' votes was negatively correlated with the change in the change in Liberal Democrat vote. The authors therefore definitively abandon the methodology of looking at swings in votes between the major two parties, or pairs of parties. The authors also argue that the reason for this was the fact that the Labour party did so badly at the expense of the Liberal Democrats in urban areas, especially ones with high ethnic minorities due to the Iraq War. They found that the Labour vote declined more than double (10.6% v

4.8%), in the 39 constituencies in which Muslims made up more than 10% of the population in comparison to those where they made up less than 1% of the population.[21]

Looking at incumbency specifically, they used simple of means of change in each party's vote, finding that the Liberal Democrats had the largest such bonus as per usual. There was a retirement penalty of 4.6% for seats where the incumbent stood down in 2005, a first term bonus of 3.3% for seats gained from another party in 2001, and 5.9% for seats where a new Lib Dem MP had taken over from a previous Lib Dem incumbent who had retired in 2001. There were comparatively few new MPs at the 2001 election re-standing for the first time in 2005 given the lack of seats changing hands at the former election. The authors found that the seven Tories who had picked up a seat off another party in 2001 outperformed by 4% in 2005. Regarding an extra second term incumbency effect for those Labour MPs elected in 1997 taking seats off the Conservatives, the authors found that there did appear to be an outperformance, with incumbents in such seats doing 1.3% than Labour MPs nationwide, but they concede that this may well have been more to do with the distortions of Labour doing very badly in their inner city heartlands.

Curtice et al. (2010), the 2010 Appendix on the results, made it clear that the authors believed that incumbency had become and important consideration.

One of the features of recent British elections has been a tendency for MPs – especially those in marginal seats – to develop a 'personal vote'. MPs are seemingly able to attract a degree of support for themselves as individuals rather than the party they represent by being highly visible and active within their constituency.

The authors noted that the 2009 MPs expenses scandal complicated matters considerably. On the Labour side, 100 of the 348 notionally Labour seats at the election[22] did not have the incumbent who represented the seat or the majority of a redrawn seat, standing for re-election, and the main reason for this cited was pressure to stand down after being implicated for claiming unreasonable expenses or even in a few cases being charged for fraud. Despite this apparent strategic retirement, there was still an observed penalty for the party of 2.2%, with the party doing worse in terms of vote share for incumbent retirements on a simple mean basis. The authors also looked at the mean vote share decline in the seats in which 39 seriously implicated Labour MPs re-stood, finding a penalty of 1.5% compared with the other 209 incumbents.

The authors also looked at the Conservatives' performance by comparing mean change in the vote in seats where incumbents re-stood and retired, finding a retirement penalty of 1.2%. They found 1.5% first time surge for the new MPs from 2005 who re-stood for the first time. There was also a penalty of 1.6% for the incumbents who were most seriously implicated by the expenses scandal and who re-stood.[23] For the Liberal Democrats a retirement penalty of 4.7% was found along with a first time surge of 3.1%, somewhat less than at prior elections. The section on the Liberal Democrats in the rival *Britain Votes 2010*, Cutts et al. (2010), found a different number for the first term incumbents

despite using the same methodology. The second set of authors had slightly different criteria about exactly who should be considered to be first term incumbents,[24] finding a first term surge of 4.3% of the vote, much larger than the Nuffield Study found. They concurred with the 4.7% retirement penalty, clearly using the same names. There is an important point to note here, which is that consistent selection criteria, especially in elections after boundary changes, is extremely important.

2.4 Other UK empirical work on MP's incumbency advantage 1979 - 2010

Most studies of incumbency in the UK based using macro data have been single election studies, or at most by comparing the results of a specific election with the previous. One attempt to look at it over a longer period is the study by Gaines (1998), which uses election data from 1950 to 1992. Gaines's model is also somewhat different to other approaches, he argued that that the three-party nature of the UK system made the usual binary equations (slurge etc.) in use for the US model are not appropriate. He created a model based on running each party's vote separately, not dissimilar to that done by Curtice and Steed, but trying to create a model for use over a series of elections rather than election t-1 and t. His model is as follows:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \mu_t + \beta' x_{it} + \in_{it}$$

Gaines (1998)

Where: y is the party's vote in i constituency at election t; α is the "normal vote"[25] in the constituency, with partisanship assumed to be constant; μ the electoral trend; $\beta' x$ being the matrix of candidate attributes incumbent or non-incumbent; $\in$ error term. Four sub periods, (1950-59), (1964-70) (1974F–1979), (1983-1992) were used in the assessment to show how things had changed, and to minimize the boundary change problem. Gaines stated that his results showed small, but nevertheless sensible coefficients, for the major party incumbency advantage. For the 1950s results a Conservative incumbent in an unchanged district appeared to have an incumbency advantage of 1.35% of the vote, whereas a Conservative candidate who was challenging a Labour incumbent suffered a penalty of 0.74%, and when challenging a Liberal incumbent, 4% worse. The very small number of Liberal incumbents in the 1950s appeared to have bonuses of around 15%, larger than that of members of Congress. Gaines put that down to the very tiny number of such MPs arguing the numbers should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Gaines states that the data after the 1950s is not what one might have expected given the literature about how MPs roles have changed and how much more independently they have been behaving.[26] He shows that the incumbency bonus for the major parties barely changed from the 1950s to the 1970s, staying 1 to 1.5% in the two later periods for the Conservatives and just edging up to 2% for Labour in the 1983/92 cycle (for unchanged districts). The Liberal incumbency settles down at around 6-8% for the later periods, and Gaines argues that this is a mixture of incumbency, and also the fact that there is a winning Liberal MP, it removes the negative tactical vote penalty they might otherwise fall victim to, but that there is no satisfactory method of disentangling the two. Gaines says for the two major parties, there is no firm evidence of any *increase* in incumbency advance since the 1970s despite the major changes in MPs behaviour.

Norton and Wood (1993)'s *Back from Westminster*, contains empirical analysis using 'macro' election results focussing on the 1987 general election. One of the

themes in the book is analysing the effects that the changes in MPs' roles have had on their electoral prospects, and the authors were looking for evidence as to whether changes in behaviour of MPs had affected incumbency advantage such that newer MPs not only benefitted from a first term surge, but also benefitted from a larger incumbency advantages than earlier cohorts still serving in the House.

The authors used mean change in the vote from 1983 by party to measure the performance of incumbent Conservative and Labour MPs at the 1987 election. The data shows that incumbent Conservatives saw an average 0.4% vote share increase, versus a 0.7% decline for a non-incumbent Conservative candidate in previously Conservative seats. For Labour the difference was larger, with the average Labour incumbent improving 6.1% on the 1983 result, and the average non-incumbent improving just 2.9%. However, it is pretty easy to criticise this point on the grounds that in the 1987 election, there was clear evidence of a North/South split (Curtice and Steed, 1988), with Labour doing much better in regions in which they already held many seats and poorly in southern ones in which they held very few.

Norton and Wood then look at the performance of MPs of each party by cohort. The best performing MPs on each side, were those 119 Conservative MPs first elected in 1983 who increased their votes on average by 1.9%, and the 48 Labour MPs first elected in 1983 who improved their vote share by 7.8%, typical of a first time surge. They also find evidence that the 1979 cohort appeared to have done better than its predecessors for both major parties, with the Conservative vote rising in seats where the incumbent was first elected in 1979, when it fell for almost every other cohort other than the 1983 sophomores, whilst Labour's class of 1979 incumbents outperformed every other group except the very first few elected and still remaining from 1959.

Average gain or loss of vote by cohort (1983 to 1987)

Incumbent MP first elected in …

	1983	1979	1974	1970	1966	1964	1959	< 1959
Conservative	1.6	0.1	-0.5	-0.2	-1.1	-1.1	-0.4	0.8
Labour	7.8	6.5	3.9	5.8	3.9	5.2	6.7	5

Norton and Wood (1993) p. 132

Norton and Wood state that the data presents a dilemma because it is not clear whether the outperformance of the 1979 cohort is due to an intergenerational change, with newer MPs working more effectively in terms of vote seeking due to changes in working practices, (as discussed in the previous section), or whether it is an example of the life cycle model, with newer incumbents working harder to build up their own personal vote, and suggesting that incumbency accrues over more than one term. A third possibility, they have not considered is that it could be down to a lack of controls in the data. The apparent success of both the 1979 Conservative and Labour cohorts may be due to the fact Conservatives did

well a third time in 1987, on top of success in 1983, in areas they had picked up a lot of their 1979 gains, such as London. Meanwhile, most of Labour's 1987 improvement came in their heartland areas.[27] This may explain the apparent difference better than an assumption that there was anything special about the 1979 intake.

Norris et al. (1992) also tested the significance of incumbency using macro results data from a single election, 1992, but they expanded their analysis to test for other candidate factors at the same time. Candidate information was obtained from the 1992 British Candidates Survey, in which incumbent MPs and challenging candidates had been encouraged to participate. The methodology differs from other such studies in that rather than looking for coefficients for incumbency advantage, it tests the statistical significance of incumbency advantage alongside other factors in explaining the percentage vote for each of the major parties at the 1992 election as the dependent variable in each constituency. The predictor coefficients are dominated by the 1987 vote for the party, in each constituency, and other predictors of the 1992 vote tested were; whether the contest was against the other major party or the Lib Dems, regional swing, gender of the candidate, whether there was a retirement or first term incumbent (career cycle), the length of time an incumbent had served (longitudinal), whether the incumbent was constituency service oriented,[28] and the ideology of the incumbent or candidate.[29] For both parties, candidate gender and ideology were insignificant. They found that career cycle incumbency was significant for Labour MPs, whilst longitudinal incumbency was significant for Conservatives. Whilst the former would be as one would have expected given other such studies, the latter is out of line with other studies that find little evidence of additional incumbency beyond the first term, let alone that those who had been in office for several terms might continue to accrue additional incumbency advantage.

Katz and King (1999) and Tomz et al. (2010) attempted to overcome the problem of the UK authors using biased methodologies such as slurge. Both sets of authors are sceptical about the value of creating a pseudo two-party system in multiparty countries such as the UK, by running a single party's vote share against the other parties combined. They are also concerned about using standard ordinary least squares (Johnston et al., 2004) in such a scenario given the model assumes that the dependent variables are unbound whereas they are of course limited to between zero and one (in terms of the proportion of the vote). Tomz et al argue that the first methodology proposed by Katz and King ("KK") may be over complicated for practical use, especially when there are more than three parties standing. KK demands the use of maximum likelihood functions and the evaluation of high-level integrals. The second article proposes the use of seemingly unrelated regression analysis of Frasure (1971), in order to run separate regressions on pairs of parties.

Both studies used election data from 1959 to 1992 and estimated incumbency advantage for all three national parties. KK analysis found an advantage for Conservative MPs of 0.5 to 1%, around 1% for Labour MPs and found approximately 3% for Liberals, Alliance, Lib Dems. The second set of analyses

found similar but more variable incumbency advantages for the Conservatives and Labour, but larger and also more variable such advantages for the Liberals, ranging from -2% to 8% of the vote. There appears to be a possible flaw in both models, though that in the earlier years there was almost never a Liberal retirement, which meant that there were no 'open Liberal seats' to compare against that had been held by the party at the election. Additionally, in some elections, such as 1959, 1970, Feb 1974, 1979 and 1983 all-first term Liberal incumbents were the winners of by elections, which would have distorted the vote. Estimates for the Conservatives and Labour parties are similar to observed results in the *Nuffield Studies* up to 1992.

2.5 Changes in the role and behaviour of the MP

A number of academic works in 1980s and 1990s focused on the big change that there had been in the role of and performance MPs between the 1950s and 1980s and indeed the professionalization of politics. The key themes discussed are the increase in constituency casework addressed by MPs themselves, the increase in interactions with the public through letters, the increased specialization of members in their committee roles, and an increase in independence from their party's whips in terms of voting in the House of Commons. The idea of a new breed of MPs and politicians in general has also been popular amongst political studies authors, with many stressing a move away from gentlemen amateurs and part-timers to full time professional politicians who have set –out to take up politics as their chosen career path. For this study of MPs' personal votes, these changes could well be expected to have serious consequences. Indeed the literature itself, (Cain et al., 1987) Norton and Wood (1990), Norton (1994), Gaines (1998), argue that these changes should enhance the likelihood of incumbent MPs picking up a personal vote and indeed the extent to which they do so. This section will discuss the literature's attitude to the changing role of a constituency MP.

2.5.1 Amateurism to professionalization

Norton and Wood (1993) surveyed the change in the behaviour of MPs from the 1950s to the 1980s. They describe the traditional Conservative backbench member as an amateur who was often little more than a spectator. Ambitious professional politicians who wanted to make a career of it would aim for very safe seats. Thus the amateur MPs wouldn't have bothered to promote their constituency and constituency work, whilst the more careerist politicians in safe seats wouldn't have felt any need to do so. The traditional Labour MP is also described as being disinclined to promote constituency interests. Norton and Wood describe traditional Labour members as being very much in tune with their local union organization and that they would be likely to sub-ordinate local interests to those of the Labour movement as a whole. Since the 1960s, the pool of those wishing to pursue politics as a full-time and indeed lifetime career has meant that these traditional MPs have been gradually phased out. The number of women MPs has increased from 1% of Conservatives in 1951, 6% in 1992 to 21% in 2015. Labour has increased its total from 2% in 1951 to 14% in 1992 to 43% in 2015 (Butler, 1995, Campbell and Childs, 2015).

The overall time spent in performing the role of an MP has been a key measure of this change since the 1950s. As Norton & Wood (1993), show, it was very common for MPs to carry out their role as a side-line to another career such as at the bar and would turn up to the House, which met exclusively in the evenings, after work. From 1946 until 1999, the House did not start until 2.30pm on Monday to Thursdays (House of Commons Information Office), and with questions and statements taking place before any meaning no votes would take place until at least the early evening, meaning an MP wouldn't necessarily be needed in Westminster during office hours.

The 1983 report by the Senior Salaries Review Board showed that there was a big increase between the 1950s and even the 1979/83 Parliament with MPs reporting that they worked an average of 62 hours per week in their role as an MP. A survey by the Hansard Society in 2015 showed a further increase with first term MPs reporting spending an average of 69 hours per week with an additional 10 hours per week of travel time (Korris, 2011). Evidence also emerged that the large amount of casework and extreme hours was actually responsible for encouraging some MPs to stand-down early. In the valedictory debate of 2015, Aiden Burley MP, who stood down after a single term, cited "rude and awkward" constituents persecuting his wife, as well as the hours and media intrusion as being too high a price to pay for being a Member of Parliament (United Kingdom, 2015).

2.5.2 Changes in candidate selection:

Conservatives

Conservative candidate selection had been modernised in the late 1940s, with the Maxwell-Fyfe reforms, which prohibited candidates being able to buy the nomination by offering large donations to the associations. Contributions were capped at £25 per year for prospective candidates and £50 per year for an incumbent MP; this was designed to make selections more meritocratic and open the Parliamentary Party to a broader cross section of society. Aspiring candidates initially applied to the candidates department of Central Office, which then sent the candidates to interviews with panels of MPs and then party Vice Chairman with responsibility for candidates. After the defeats of 1964/66, Chairman Edward du Cann brought in management consultants to assist the vetting process and attempted to make a serious purge of the candidates list, although the Nuffield study of the 1970 election Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky (1971) claimed the was largely ineffectual due to the fact that many on the list were important locally. In criticising the selection system, Paterson (1967), claims that Central Office had much more control of the selection system than was obvious with knighthoods and invitations on offer to constituency chairman who selected the favoured CCO candidate. Additionally, Paterson alleges is made that there were really three lists, young graduates who would be encouraged to cut their teeth in hopeless constituencies, a list of middle class candidates for marginal constituencies and a special list for the safe seats of 'gentleman rather than players.'

The 1970 Nuffield study authors also disagreed with the view that CCO had such strong control. They pointed out that much to the party hierarchy's annoyance, Peter Thomas, Geoffrey Howe and Anthony Meyer, were all initially rejected by half a dozen constituency associations.[30] Butler adds that unlike the Labour Party, the Conservative associations were generally uninterested in the ideology of the candidate, with their personality and that of their wives considered much more important. The Conservative process of candidate selection continued in a similar manner for much of the period. As early as the 1950s, Central Office had been pleading association to consider selecting women candidates, something that was largely ignored. The party updated the process for applications to join the approved list, with the introduction of the Parliamentary Assessment Board, a series of tests, interviews and role-play exercises on a weekend-away (Williams and Pauk, 2011). However, up to and including the 2001 election, local associations maintained the right to select unapproved 'local candidates' if they wished, and the candidate was satisfactorily ex post facto approved.

However, after the second landslide defeat at the 2001 election, the centre took more control requiring all candidates have had to be pre-approved onto this national list. Party Chairman Theresa May made it clear they had to select more women in winnable seats after the number of women in the Parliamentary increased by just one at the 2001 election. The party has levied an annual charge of £80 on all candidates, whether selected or not, and has required them to provide a minimum number of hours of campaigning in by elections or local elections, as well as training days (Montgomerie, 2006). The party has also taken to purging the candidates list after each election, and after the 2005 election, David Cameron created a preferred 'A list' of priority candidates, many of whom had not previously stood for election. Constituency parties also have no right to give a previous candidate first refusal on re-standing, however close they came to winning. Open primaries were instituted which allowed non-members of the party to participate in the selection. Finally in 2009, David Cameron changed the rules once again, to allow people with no previous experience to join the approved list, (the A-list having been dropped). Three successful candidates who became MPs, Daniel Poulter, Bob Stewart and Rory Stewart were said to have been amongst the beneficiaries of this (Williams and Pauk, 2011).

Labour

Unlike the Conservatives with a single list of approved candidates, Labour had three lists of eligible candidates from which constituency associations could chose: union sponsored panel, party list, and Cooperative Party list. Selection for all of these lists varied greatly; although candidates were vetted more strictly than Conservatives were, in order to prevent infiltration by Communists or Trotskyites. Union selection for their panel of approved and sponsored candidates varied with some like the AEU introducing a competitive examination for the 25 places on their panel. They also required defeated candidates and even defeated former MPs to formally reapply. (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, 1971) noted the trend in the 1960s for their being far more Union Sponsored candidates selected as this often brought resources to the association.

Additionally, union sponsorship allowed 'Gaitskillite' moderates such as Bill Rodgers to be levered into place perhaps against more hard line members. Butler also noted the irritation that the then Labour headquarters Transport House felt with the increase in Co-operative Party candidates who, although in reality were nothing different to any other Labour MP, were technically not affiliated to Labour.

The hard left attacked the Labour candidate selection process, and at the 1981 Special Party conference changed the party's internal rules such all candidates, including incumbent MPs, had to face compulsory re-selection by constituency associations. There was resentment to the trend Butler noted above of candidates being much more moderate than the Labour associations for which they were meant to represent. The rule change led to the mass breakaway of moderate MPs to form the Social Democrat Party, who knew they were sure to be de-selected (Bochel and Denver, 1983). Candidates in the 1980s were often controversial and by election defeats were caused by perceived extremism with candidates such as Peter Tatchell and 'Dreadful' Deirdre 'The Whale' Wood (Criddle, 1988). The party leadership under Kinnock fought back, expelling a number of militant tendency candidates, and also two incumbent MPs, Dave Nellist and Terry Fields (Waller and Criddle, 1996).

After the 1992 election, the rules were changed to prevent trade union affiliated members from participating in the selection process unless they became full members, and imposed one member one vote (Williams and Pauk, 2011). There was also the abolition of the trade union sponsored panels. The Party allowed constituency associations to select non-approved candidates provided that the NEC gave their own ex post approval. The party also developed a stronger focus on the selection of women and minorities over the whole period. A number of inner city constituencies with high ethnic minority populations saw campaigns to replace white candidates with B&ME ones and a grassroots pressure group [BLAAC – Black and Asian candidates], to enable this, was formed (Criddle, 1988). Pressure for women came from above with the NEC choosing certain winnable constituencies and constituencies where the incumbent was retiring to have all women shortlists. Although they were declared to be illegal in 1996, the Labour Government changed the law, which allowed them to reintroduce them for 2005 and 2010. The Labour party adopted a Conservative style approved list but, has not insisted on making it obligatory in order to be selected.

Liberals

During the earlier period, although the Liberal candidate selection process was the same as the Conservative process with applicants from a single national list of approved candidates being interviewed and then selected by party members in each individual constituency association, given the dearth of winnable seats prior to 1974, the process is described as more of a search than a selection (Paterson, 1967). Indeed, as late as the 1992 election, two-thirds of Lib Dem candidates were selected by the first constituency they applied to, whereas Conservative hopefuls applied to a mean of 11 constituencies before being selected (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). The fact that prior to the

Representation of the People Act 1985, the deposit of £125, was forfeited unless the candidate achieved 12.5% of the vote, meant it was difficult to find the necessary candidates, at least until high inflation in the 1970s eroded the real cost of this.[31] After the SPD breakaway in 1981, the new Alliance formed with the Liberals decided to contest all seats. The 1983 and 1987 elections' candidate selection was the result of considerable negotiation between the two components of the Alliance, although there was less trouble in constituencies where there was an SPD or Liberal incumbent MP. National agreements between the Liberals and the SDP decided which of the parties would stand in each constituency at the 1983 election, was largely unchanged at the 1987 election (Criddle, 1988). After the merger, the Liberal Democrats have insisted that all candidates be pre-approved centrally, but otherwise have left constituency parties complete autonomy in selection without any A-list or all women-shortlist rules.

2.5.3 Constituency surgeries and casework

As well as the total time spent on the job of being an MP, there has been a very large amount of increase in the time in which MPs spend, and are expected to spend in their constituency. Austen Mitchell MP in an interview with his local paper on his own retirement said how much the local workload had increased since his election in 1977, the former MP Anthony Crosland only came to the constituency once per month, and his predecessor even less frequently (Grimsby Telegraph, 2014). Norton and Wood (1990) claim it was common for MPs to visit constituencies no more than annually. The numbers of MPs carrying out constituency surgeries had increased after the War, but was considered a minority interest before 1960, with Lord Attlee, in 1958, criticizing such MPs for carrying out such weekend work (Lawrence, 2009). The adoption of constituency surgeries was something that changed during the 1960s with surveys showing a large majority of MPs had started holding them at least occasionally by the end of the decade (Norton and Wood, 1990). In 2011, the reaction to the discovery that an MP did not hold surgeries was dramatic, with Sir Stuart Bell MP being condemned as the laziest MP in the House for not holding them. Bell claimed to have done so for security reasons, having been threatened by constituents in 1997 (Brown, 2011).

The increase in constituency casework is ubiquitous in studies of the changing role of the MP. As well as the professionalization of the MP, there has been a change in the MP's office capacity to actually carry out, as well as an increase in constituency demand for casework, and a tendency for MPs to actively solicit it. Prior to 1960s MPs usually did not have secretaries and had to reply to any constituencies in their own hand (Norton and Wood, 1990). Contemporary literature comparing MPs with US Members of Congress concluded that MPs simply did not have the resources that the Congress member had and so would not be able to perform the kinds of casework that the latter would routinely perform (Crockett, 1967). Norton (1990) pointed out that this had changed by the 1980s with almost all MPs having secretaries, many with offices in the constituency and in Westminster. Additional reforms in the both the Thatcher and Blair era further increased MPs' office expenses leading some to question if

incumbents now a built-in advantage over their challengers (Johnston and Pattie, 2009). Prepaid mail allowances were increased to 9,000 GBP per year in 2014/5, and staffing allowances at 138,600 to 145,500 GBP per year, enough to employ several full time staff for the MP's office.

With the regard to the supply-side for constituency service, Searing (1985) analysed the behaviour of MPs in the 1979/83 Parliament and concluded that about a quarter of backbench MPs had adopted the style of specializing as a "constituency member," with around two-thirds of these sub-specializing in casework and the rest focussing on being a local promoter. The constituency members spent more time than other members in their constituencies and often saw themselves as a kind of super-welfare officer. Looking back to an earlier Parliament (1970/4) he found that time spent in the constituency was negatively correlated to length of service and also correlated to the type of role that the member had apparently chosen for themselves. He found no significant correlation between the distance of the constituency to London or indeed to the incumbent's marginality with time spent in the constituency. He concluded that this was evidence that newer cohorts of MPs were becoming more constituency focussed as part of a generational change rather than a cynical hunt for votes by MPs in marginal seats.

Another motive for MPs to have increased their constituency work was in order to keep their local associations happy (Buck and Cain, 1990). MPs who got in trouble with party members over political disputes such as abortion, the EEC, or capital punishment could make themselves safer by being a good constituency member. On the Labour side, a change in rules on re-selection brought about by the left in 1980 meant that all Labour MPs would face mandatory re-selection hearings. The left had been discontented with the fact that whilst most activists were on the left the party, most MPs were on the centre and centre-right, thus the rule change was an attempt by the left to change this (Bochel and Denver, 1983). The Cain study (Cain et al., 1987) is keen on highlighting this rule change as a reason why Labour MPs felt the need to increase their output of casework. Additionally, it has been argued that there are many more local rivalries that an MP encounters due to the post Radcliffe-Maude local Government setup being far more politicized than it was prior to 1973. Councillors compete with Members of Parliament for local publicity and the latter could attempt to push a weak preforming MP out in order to the replace them. That said, it has been rare that alleged inattentiveness to constituency service has been responsible for a constituency association to decide to deselect an MPs by a local association, Tim Yeo MP, who was deselected following a an executive vote, and a ballot of party members is an unusual case (Mason, 2014).[32]

2.5.4 Constituency project work

The expansion of the role of and power of the state is a reason for the increase in MPs project work as well as casework cited by a number of writers in the UK and elsewhere (Fiorina, 1977b) (Cain et al., 1987). Norton and Wood (1993) give the example of the creation of, and expansion of the NHS as part of the growth of the state, thus project work such as saving a hospital or attracting new NHS facilities

into the district has given more opportunity for MPs to lobby on behalf of their constituency. Factors such as regional aid from the EU have attracted lobbying from inner city MPs in places like London, Birmingham and Tyneside. Searing (1985), looking at MPs who were considered to have specialized as local promoters argued that Government planning decisions such as building a by-pass attracted such MPs like a magnet. He used survey data to show that Conservative "constituency members" were much more likely to take on this project work focused local promoter sub category, than Labour members who stick with the welfare officer subcategory, although of course there is overlap. Norton and Wood (1993) also argued that MPs are certainly aware of the potential electoral advantages of the work, they say that whilst casework success relies on word of mouth to give the MP credit, a successful project can be advertised and publicized for the member's benefit, such that the changes, (e.g. electoral volatility increasing), that have occurred to encourage more casework, are also responsible for the increase in project work. Norton and Wood also give industrial decline as another reason. In the 1980s project work like saving a steel-mill or a shipyard became particularly relevant. They used survey data on MPs ideology and propensity to engage in constituency lobby, to show that the most pro free-market Tory MPs were actually as keen to lobby for Government support for local industries or interests as "wet" or one-nation MPs. The data showed, that 50 to 60% of MPs saying that lobbying on behalf of the constituency's economic interest was normal.

2.5.5. Constituent contact

Work flow from constituents contacting their Member increased dramatically from the 1950s to the 1990s, letters received from constituencies increased enormously from 12-20 per week in the 1950s, to around 75 per week in the 1960s, and up to 50 per day by the 1980s (Norton, 1994). Half of issue letters were from within the constituency with the remainder being form letters from pressure groups. From the 1980s to the 2010s a change in technology meant that the proportion of people contacting their MP by letter declined to 24% by 2011 with email, non-existent in the 1980s rising to 49% by 2011, and other forms of new media such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, taking an increasing role (Korris, 2011). In the earlier part of the period, a survey by Barker and Rush (1972) showed that the majority of the letters received by MPs were policy related, offering an opinion on political issues rather than being a request for assistance, they found that there was a lower proportion of casework requests in more affluent areas. Their study showed that even as early as the mid 1960s, some MPs, especially newer ones appeared to be soliciting letters by running local campaigns, some inviting such a response from the public. In terms of the electoral effects of this increase in letter traffic, Cain et al. (1987), in a detailed study on MPs[33] found that the majority of letter writers to both were satisfied or very satisfied with the responses of their MP, particularly information seekers. A minority of policy letter writers were not satisfied, but the authors put this down to the fact that some of these were likely to have been "crank" letters. The increase in letters and therefore letters back is therefore a good reason that recent writers feel that MPs have more positive contact with constituents and therefore more scope for building a personal vote.

There is perhaps a danger in overemphasising the importance of the increase in constituents contacting their Members. Whilst there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of letters, calls, emails etc. the proportion of the public who do so is not that large. The Hansard Society's 2014 and 2015 reports on political engagement indicate that only 12% of the adults surveyed had actually contacted their member in order to influence decisions, policies or laws (therefore not including casework) (Hansard Society, 2014, Hansard Society, 2015). Only around 2-3% had attended a political event or meeting. Thus, there may be a case for saying that MPs engagement with their constituents may not have broadened, but instead deepened with a more interested and well informed minority.

2.5.6 Specialization of MPs

Specialization of MPs is another change that has been picked up by the literature. Imitating Richard Fenno's *Home Style* (Fenno, 1978) see section 3.6 <below>, the US authors Cain et al. (1979) presented a qualitative investigation about whether UK MPs adopt a home style appropriate to the composition of their constituencies. They based the articles on a series of interviews with a small group of MPs (in the 1974/9) Parliament, to assess how the MPs were behaving. They compared an elderly Conservative "squire," Sir H., with Fenno's "Congressman A," both represented rural districts and a took person to person approach. Having said that, the authors pointed out that Sir H. was a patrician and very much not one of the boys like Congressman A. The authors said that Sir H.'s style was very much on the way out and noted his frustration with newer members professionalizing the role of MP. The new breed of MP was epitomized by "Mr G" who had won a heterogeneous marginal seat in 1974, and had taken a heavy casework load and constituency work in order to try to make himself safer. The authors point out that Mr. G had actually studied US Congressman and had familiarized himself with their techniques.

A Cabinet Member, Mr S, whom one can easily deduce was Michael Stewart, the MP for Fulham,[34] adopted his high national profile as the centrepiece of his style. He told the authors that the pride factor of having a senior minister such as himself as the MP would be worth an extra thousand votes (Cain et al., 1979). Another of Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina's styles is "Mr R" the issues man. The authors reported his scorn for "constituency service" MPs like "Mr G", and that he believed that it was his duty as a socialist to push the interests of the working class across the country.

The conjecture that members in heterogeneous districts are more likely to specialize as constituency servants does have some empirical support. Searing (1987) used constituency data based on the percentage of the workforce who were manual workers, those constituencies around the 50% mark, indicating a heterogeneous district, were far more likely to have an MP specializing as a constituency member than those with either a very high or very low proportion of manual workers, and therefore much more homogenous, at least with respect to the labour force.

Looking at other styles of MP, Searing (1987), examined issue based MPs, describing them as policy advocates, and sub-dividing them into three categories, *ideologues*, *specialists* and *generalists*. The ideologues, Tory populists or Labour Marxists,[35] were reported to be a very small minority, with most MPs being generalists who speak on all issues, or specialists who focus on one or two. Searing further argued that based on his research and interviews in the early 1980s, that the numbers of generalists are very much on the decline, with specialists replacing them, and looking to new select committees to pursue their main subjects. One important consideration on this subject was that the newer style specialist policy advocates were often taking on subjects that were specific to their constituencies, as well as ones related to their own interest or previous profession. For example an MP who had a naval port in his constituency, said that he had taken up a special interest in order to get closer to his constituents.

A major change since the 1950s has been the increase in the role of committees, which has allowed MPs to pursue their interests in specific policy areas. The Select Committee system in its current form was established in 1979 in order to provide scrutiny and oversight of the executive as well as the opportunity to make recommendations. Prior to 1979 there had been a more ad hoc system of committees, and as with many of the changes experienced during the 1955-2015 period, things were changing at the beginning of the period with a major increase in ad hoc committees during the 1950s and 1960s, which is what led to demands for the 1979 reforms (Russell and Benton, 2011). Additional reforms "Cook Reforms" were made in 2002 by the then Leader of the House, which allowed permanent Select Committee staffing, and from 2010, Select Committee chairman were elected from the House. A number of outgoing MPs in the valedictory debate in 2015 stressed the extent to which the Select Committee system had been improved and the importance that these bodies now have (United Kingdom, 2015).

2.5.7 Increase in MP independence

The 1970/1974 Parliament saw an explosion in backbench rebelliousness in both parties. As Norton (1980) shows, before 1970 defying the whip was unusual, and the number of rebellions was also related to the size of the majority, since MPs knew they could cast a rebel vote without the risk of a crisis, if they rebelled against an administration with a landslide majority such as that Labour had had in 1966. The 1959/64 Parliament, which was the most rebellious between 1945 and 1970, saw at least one dissenting vote in 12.5% of divisions, but since the Government started with a majority of 100, this was never a serious problem. The 1964/66 Parliament in which Wilson started with a majority of four saw just 0.5% of divisions featuring a dissenting vote.[36] However, during the 1970/4 Parliament 20% featured a dissenting vote, and the 1974/1979 Parliament saw this ratio increase again to 21% and indeed Norton (1980) stated that this was most rebellious MPs had been since the 1860s. Cowley and Stuart (2010) show there was a decline from this peak in the 1979/1992 period, but the rate of rebellion never fell to pre 1970 levels. There was then a large upsurge in rebellions during the 1992/7 Parliament, triggered

by a major controversy over the Maastricht Treaty (Cowley and Norton, 1997), and then an increase in the rebellion rate to 21% in 2001/2005 and a new record for a single-party Government of 28% of divisions in the Labour Government 2005/2010. The 2010/2 first session of 2010/15 Parliament saw at least one MP voting against the Government in just under 45% of all divisions (Cowley and Stuart, 2015).

There have been a number of theories as to what caused this change after 1970. Philip Norton (1980), (1987), (2011) and in Norton & Wood (1993), blames the poor leadership of Edward Heath as a trigger for initial rebelliousness over the 1972 EEC Accession Treaty,[37] the European Communities Bill. He argues that Heath's aloof leadership style, which totally ignored his backbenchers' concerns, failed to promote judiciously, and insisted on passing bills un-amended, left them with only one option to register their discontent, that of voting against the Government (Norton, 1987). He argues that this outburst of dissent in 1972 revealed that the so-called "Parliament Rule", that a Government would have to resign unless a defeat was overturned, was nothing more than a myth. He argued that it also exposed the fact that actually the whips' real power to discipline members was actually much less than feared. Even from a patronage point of view, Norton points out that by the end of the Labour Government in 1979 that Callaghan would not have been able to find a Labour MP to promote, who had not cast a dissenting vote at least twice. Additionally, on the Conservative side, since there was no repeat of the Suez experience, in which critics of the Government had been turned out by their own constituency associations, MPs fear of rebelling, was much reduced.[38]

There is some controversy in the literature about the so-called Parliament Rule. Whilst Norton insists it was a myth, Franklin et al. (1986) and Franklin et al. (1987) criticized this view, arguing that in fact, prior to 1970; a Government would have felt the need to resign upon losing a serious vote. They cite Jennings (1939); "*If the Government does not dissolve to restore its majority, the Opposition will dissolve to acquire one*." However, given that Jennings also stated that the last time a Government had resigned due to a loss of a vote, in 1895, was because it chose to consider the matter a vote of confidence [ex-post] when it didn't have to do so, there may a confusion in their argument, such that it is the threat of a dissolution by the Government, rather than any kind of automatic mechanism. Whether or not the Parliament Rule was real, both sets of authors agreed it no longer applied after 1972. Nevertheless, it was the threat of a General Election in 1993 proposed by John Major voluntarily, which made the final votes on the Maastricht Treaty one of confidence and that allowed the legislation to be passed. Post 2012, the Fixed Term Parliament Act has further reduced the scope for Government defeats to trigger a dissolution.

Franklin et al. (1986) argue that there is some evidence that the so-called new breed of MP has had led to additional rebelliousness. They looked at the rebelliousness of Conservative and Labour MPs in the 1970/74 Parliament, and indeed the intensity of the rebelliousness with cross-voting considered to be more serious than simply defying the whip where the opposition (or Government in the case of Labour MPs), was abstaining or had no whip in place.

They found that salaried Tory MPs, (i.e. middle class members rather than the old fashioned "squires"), and indeed Trade Union sponsored Labour MPs were more likely to rebel more and indeed more intensely than other colleagues. They also found that more recent cohorts of Labour MPs and Tory MPs with smaller majorities were more likely to rebel and to do so more intensely (Franklin et al., 1986).

The question of whether MPs believe that rebelling against an unpopular piece of legislation could help them hold onto a marginal seat and so make a rational electoral calculation is difficult to answer. There is some anecdotal evidence of this where local issues are concerned. Sir John Gorst, the Conservative MP for Hendon North went as far as resigning the whip to protest at the extremely unpopular proposed closure of the A&E wing of Edgware General Hospital ahead of the election in 1997, although there is no evidence that this act helped him since he was nevertheless defeated on 17.6% swing (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997).

Most important to this thesis is of course whether such independent voting makes a difference to electoral outcomes. Pattie et al. (1994), show some evidence that those Tory MPs who rebelled against the poll tax by voting for the Mates amendment to band the tax by income, outperformed their colleagues at the 1992 election but they don't make any claims that these MPs cross-voted for electoral purposes. Cain et al. (1987) claimed that whilst there was little evidence of MPs being able to acquire a policy-based personal vote in the US, the breakdown of party discipline be encourage this as an on-going development. They point to Enoch Powell (see also <above>) as having had a personal vote based his strident views opposing immigration, but there was no evidence his motive was anything to do with gaining a personal vote in his constituency. Thus, whilst in the US where Congress members *are* considered to make a rational judgement based on trading off their own ideological viewpoints, electoral consequences and congressional loyalties, MPs are not considered to rebel for electoral purposes.

2.6 Conclusions

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the literature review, but the most important question to be answered is does incumbency advantage exist and does it make a difference in terms of seats? To what extent has incumbency advantage changed over the period, is it correct to assume that it has increased since the 1950s? Finally, the survey of the US literature offers the prospect of answering what methodologies could be of use in the UK context.

The overwhelming evidence from the literature review is that incumbency has a significant, measurable impact on candidate's vote shares election results in the UK. Whilst it is clearly not in the same order as for Congress members in the US, it is clear that there is an incumbency advantage of around 1-3% for the major parties and at least 5% for the Liberal Democrats. There is therefore a good case for the investigation of incumbency advantage since there is clearly going to be a positive and measurable outcome. Moreover, there is no consistent

methodology used for the entire period under question. The Nuffield Studies are an invaluable resource since they span the entire period in an entirely unique manner, but unfortunately there are several elections at which incumbency advantage is not explored at all. There is also inconsistent methodology whilst the earlier versions use swing, or two-party swing, and the later ones use a mean change in party vote.

The second question to answer is the extent to which this incumbency advantage matters in terms of seats won or lost, and whether it has made an impact on general election outcomes. On this question there is a serious lacuna in the research that has been done thus far, with a couple of exceptions, there has been little interest in exploring the impact on seats. The 1979 Nuffield Study does make reference to the fact that incumbency advantage for first time Labour incumbents may have reduced Mrs Thatcher's majority from an estimated 60 to 44, and the 1987 analysis suggests that the presence of large numbers of first term incumbents from 1983 saved seats for the Conservatives in spite of a swing to Labour. The 1992 issue argues that first time incumbency did not make a difference in 1992, because the swing was running in favour of the party which had picked up the most of the first term incumbents in swing seats at the previous election. However, this ignored the possible effects of retirements, or where there were regional or local swings in different directions. The Nuffield Studies and other such literature also miss out an analysis of the incumbency factor at close elections, such as 1964 or Feb 1974, could first term Conservative incumbents from the 1970 election have denied Labour more of a clear win at the first 1974 election? There is therefore plenty of scope for new research on this front.

Another question to answer is whether the major party incumbency advantage has increased or not. One could argue that there is a risk of the literature appearing to show an increase in incumbency advantage, or its presence from 1979 onwards, from the fact that insufficient work was done on the subject prior to this election. When authors in the US began proving the value of incumbency for elections to the House, interest naturally turned to the UK, one of the few other democracies with legislators elected by simple majorities, in single member districts. Thus, there is some possibility that incumbency advantage has not in fact changed over time at all, but that its effects in the pre-1979 period were overlooked by the research, and that more was found after 1979 because researchers were looking for it. This view ties in with the work of the Gaines (1998) study, which does appear to suggest that there hasn't been any material change. Nonetheless, enough work by the David Butler was done on incumbency, personal vote, to suggest that that at least on the face of it, there has been a change to the value of incumbency increasing from the order 0.5% of the vote to 2 – 2.5% by the 2010 election. For the Liberal Democrats, and their Liberal predecessors, there is a problem of methodology in that the sample size in the early period. There was an extremely small number of Liberal MPs in the 1950s, and newly elected ones were often the result of distortionary by elections, and it is extremely difficult to get an accurate picture of what the Liberal advantage was in the early period, and as Gaines warns, to be able to

disentangle it from any tactical effect that winning the seat in the first place would give them.

There is much that can be said for using North American studies in comparison with the work that has been done for the UK, and also to use it for guidance about what additional work could be needed. The argument that the US system is not comparable, (with the House of Representatives completely separate to the Administration,) is undermined by the work done on Canada by Krashinsky and Milne, who have successfully adapted US methodology for the Canadian system. Likewise, the work done by Krashinsky and Milne also comes from a multi-party system, which shows that US methodology could also be adapted accordingly to take account of the UK's more multi party system.

Perhaps the most serious hole in the UK literature is the lack of consistent methodology over the full period, and looking at North American literature for guidance could fill that this hole. UK studies tend to focus on a single election, the early Nuffield Studies use mean swing, and later on mean change in party vote, neither used regression-based methodologies popular in North America. The advantage of using regression-based systems is that controls can be added and the models adjusted to take account of regional or local idiosyncrasies. Given such techniques weren't available when David Butler first started looking for evidence of personal vote significance in the 1950s, therefore there is an opportunity to look again.

The key message of section 2.5 is that the literature is near unanimous about the fact the role and expected duties of a Member of Parliament have changed dramatically since the 1950s. Candidate selection changes and the larger pool of applicants mean that anyone thinking of doing the role as a part time side-job would never get through. MPs spend far more time working for their constituents on casework, and spend more time interacting with them, initially this was through an increase in letters, but is now shifting to email and social media. The question that section 2.5 produces is to what extent does this make a difference to their re-election chances.

Has the public rewarded MPs for this extra constituency work with extra votes, or is it now something that they expect as merely being part of the job, that if it wasn't done would cause a great deal of outrage. With regards to the more independent voting record of MPs, questions emerge about the causes and effects. It begs the question as to whether MPs who rebel on populist issues are gaining the respect of, and votes from their constituents, and if MPs are rebelling more in the hope of gaining these additional votes. Select Committee Membership and work as a policy specialist or a campaigning MP on a specific issue is also worth considering. Although there were MPs known for specific issues such as Enoch Powell on immigration or Sydney Silverman on capital punishment, the scope for such an approach has increased dramatically given the creation and growth in the role of the Select Committees. The third chapter, which looks at the sources of incumbency advantage in the US by theme is designed to help provide additional theoretical background and to help answer some of these questions.

Chapter 3 Literature Review Part Two

Source of incumbency advantage by theme

The purpose of this second part of this literature review is to explore the range of explanations for the existence of the incumbency advantage, especially from the revisionist post-Michigan literature. The bulk of such literature is from the US focussing on the activities of Congress members. Whilst there are some obvious differences in the political systems of the UK and US, it is nonetheless extremely useful to review the US literature as a starting point for each theme, and then to explore what the more limited UK literature has achieved.

The section starts with the Michigan Model, which argued that the only possible cue for incumbency could be the greater name recognition that incumbent candidates could receive from voters. It then goes on to explore the topics; positioning and the ideology of legislators, gerrymandering of constituencies, incumbent advantage from office perks, constituency service, style of representation, weak challengers and the possibility of strategic retirement distorting the statistics.

3.1 Name Recognition

The Michigan Model explicitly dismissed the idea that Congress members' voting records and other related issues on the ideology of the legislator could possibly make any difference to voter decisions. As detailed in the first section of the literature review, the authors stated that voters could not possibly check the voting record of their legislators and whilst the latter might think it would be important, the reality was very different. The Michigan authors Campbell et al. (1960) and Stokes and Miller (1962) did argue that there could be room for name recognition to give the incumbent legislator an advantage.

> *The incumbent candidate is by far the better known. In districts where an incumbent was opposed for re-election in 1958, 39% of our respondents knew something about the Congressman, whereas only 20% said that they knew anything about his non-incumbent opponent... ...owing to the greater seniority and longer exposure of Congressman from safe districts, the public's awareness of incumbents who were opposed for re-election in 1958, was as great as its awareness of incumbents who had had to conduction an election campaign that year.* (Stokes and Miller, 1962)

The authors explored whether a differential in name recognition between the incumbent and his challenger would shift any voters from the powerful voting cue of party identification. In cases where voters could not name either candidate, the defection rate was just 8%, and was a tiny 2% when voters knew the name of their party's candidate only. In cases where the voter could name both candidates, the rate jumped to 17%, and in the unusual cases of registered voters who could only name the other party candidate, but not their own party candidate, the defection rate was 40%. They argued the fact that only, two per cent defected when they knew the name of their own party's man, but not the

other, suggests that it was party and name recognition alone acting as the voting cue, and there was no room for voters making value judgements about whether their member had done a good or bad job, let alone any room for a judgement on their voting record.

3.2 Positioning and issue taking by legislators

The Michigan Model's insistence that voting records should not matter was first challenged by Erikson (1971). He used the *Downs Model* (Downs, 1957), as his theoretical basis, if one can use the model to show parties competing for the median voter nationally, in constituencies with differing voter make-ups to the national average, candidates will surely moderate their own positions. A Republican Congress member who managed to be elected in a district, which had more Democrat voters than the national average, would surely position himself to the left of a party colleague representing a very conservative district. Congress members were assumed to be rational office seekers who would position themselves towards the median voter in their district in order to maximize their re-election odds.

Based on that theoretical approach he used empirical evidence to find out whether the partisanship of the district would affect the Congress member's voting and secondly, if relatively moderate or extreme voting would actually affect their re-election chances. Erikson looked at all Congressional elections in the 1960s excluding seats in the idiosyncratic South. The relative partisanship of each district was found from the mean two-party Presidential vote in the 1964 and 1968 elections whilst each Congress member's voting record was taken from their New Republic Rating,[39] with zero being the most Conservative and 100 the most liberal.

When assessing Congress member behaviour, Erikson found that there was a significant correlation between the partisanship seen from the Presidential vote and the voting records of Congress members in both parties. The most conservative Congress member sat in the seats with the lowest Democrat partisanship, with a correlation of -0.48 between conservative voting and Democrat partisanship. Likewise, for Democrats was a correlation coefficient of 0.37 between liberal voting record and Democrat partisanship. Looking at whether extremism had a negative impact on Congress members' re-election Erikson found Republicans who were one standard deviation more conservative than median, would receive about 1.6%-point less at the next election than their more moderate colleagues. For the Democrats the coefficients were insignificant. Erikson states despite the failure to pick up any significance on the Democrat side, the GOP results do show there is something to be said for the theory.

Mayhew (1974a) endorsed Erikson's view that Congress members take account of the partisanship of their districts, and went further, arguing that there had been an increase in strategic positioning since the 1950s, and that this had been part of the reason for the observed increase in incumbency advantage. Mayhew argued that Congress members had become more skilful in assessing the

opinions of voters in their districts noting the increase in use of polling. He noted at that election GOP Congress members who had endorsed Barry Goldwater[40] had done disproportionately badly in the House election in 1964, and that that was probably why there was no rush from Democrats to endorse the equally unpopular George McGovern in 1972.

Wright (1978) tested individual level voter survey data from the 1966 House election, versus the positioning of the candidates for that election from the NBC candidate interview process. This latter data was of the candidates' (including incumbents re-standing) professed position rather than any actual voting record. Wright split them into thirds amongst their parties, liberal, moderate, conservative. The voter survey data suggested that voters with an incumbent re-standing are much more likely to vote for that incumbent in cases where the incumbent had a closer proximity to their own policy preferences. A voter with an opposition party preference had a 65% chance of defecting to the incumbent candidate in the most proximate group, but only 37% chance of defecting to an incumbent in the group furthest away from their party (most extreme). He argued that even if "irrational and oblivious voters" cancel each other out, there would still be plenty of scope for the minority of voters who look at issues to actually make an impact.

A later empirical study, Brady et al. (2000a), looked over multiple elections, 1954-1996, focussed upon losing incumbents to try to see if their ideology/voting record cost them their jobs. These authors claim to show that in virtually all elections in the period, losing Democrat incumbents had voted too liberally for their districts and losing GOP incumbents had voted too conservatively. They argue that Congress members do this for their own ideological reasons, or effectively trade their votes in order to gain advancement from their party's leadership. Like the Erikson (1971) study, they use Presidential vote (PVOTE) as the base for a partisan measure of the district, and for the measure of the voting record of the incumbent Congress member they use the ADA score,[41] which they argue is very well publicized in the districts.

Like Erikson they looked at district partisanship determining Congress member behaviour and secondly, whether their roll-call voting behaviour out of line with district partisanship would harm their re-election prospects. On the first they found Republicans more are more sensitive to district partisanship, with the coefficient usually above unity, such that a 1% increase in GOP partisanship in the district correlated to a 1%-point increase in the Congress member's ADA score. The Democrat coefficient ranged between 0.36 and 0.84 over the period, the authors blame the lack of responsiveness to specific issues in the South, especially in the earlier period. Where Congress members were defeated, candidates were estimated to be 2.05 points more conservative in the case of GOP incumbents or 2.05 points more Liberal than the expected norm for their districts. The authors argue that whilst it is unlikely that voters could be knowledgeable about everything their Congress member does, it is certainly possible that upsetting voters on a few key issues could doom incumbents.

Stone and Simas (2010) test candidate ideology at the 2006 Mid Term looking to see if candidates' ideology had had an impact on this election. They argue that incumbents or candidates with ideological views further away from that of their district could avoid this disadvantaging them by building up a stock of credit on so called "valence issues," e.g. their personal integrity. They suggest that if a candidate is able to build up a significant advantage over their opponent on valence qualities, then it will allow them to get away with running with position (or indeed possessing a voting record), that is further away from the centre of gravity in the district than their opponent. They note that this has the potential to be a particularly advantageous to the incumbent who has had the time and opportunity to build up a rapport with constituents.

Another study by Carson et al. (2010), tests whether there is a cost to a Congress member following the party line. They argue, that in theory, in might well be advantageous for Congress members to distance themselves from party votes on unpopular issues and of course those issues which are especially specifically problematic to their district. They suggest that it makes theoretical sense for Congress members with a lower party loyalty score to outperform their colleagues. They used election data from 1956-2004 to test this conjecture, the incumbent members' share of the two party vote at each election was run against, party loyalty (CQ index), a score on overall ideology (DW-Nominate), to control for extremism, and then the usual controls of district partisanship, previous vote, spending gap, freshman/senior, party, Presidential approval, midterm/presidential year, change in personal income. The results for the whole period 1956-2004 and the sub-period 1978-2004, showed that the party unity number was significant and negative as had been conjectured, although the DW-Nominate variable to account for extremism was not significant. This suggests that Congress members who *are* more inclined to vote against the party line, to either side towards the centre or extreme wing, can be rewarded.

As Cain et al. (1987) explain in their comparative analysis of incumbency in the US and UK systems, there is an obvious difference in that the UK Parliamentary system determines the makeup of the executive, whereas that is not the case from the US with the separation of powers. Therefore the scope for UK MPs to run their own policy agendas is much more limited, although the authors noted, even writing about the late 1970s, early 1980s, that party discipline was somewhat breaking down, something that has accelerated in both parties since 1992 (Cowley and Stuart, 2015). The next subsection will also highlight the difference in emphasis in UK studies, whilst the US models look at left-right, liberal-conservative voting, studies of MPs often focus on the member voting on specific issues, or having a reputation as an independent member.

UK research on position taking

There has been a considerable amount of research on the increase in MP independent voting, especially when it means rebelling from their party whip, and this has been set out in detail in subsection 2.5.7 <above>. The literature sets out the extent to which MPs rebel, who rebels, why they rebel, and the consequences of rebellion for the operation of Parliament and legislation. There

is comparatively little literature and especially little systematic research on the consequences of such rebel voting in terms of the MP's performance at election time.

Chapter One deliberately selected two anecdotal examples of ideological politicians, Renee Short and Enoch Powell. There appears to have been no obvious disadvantage for them having taken high profile radical positions, and in Powell's case it may have given him a larger incumbency vote. The Nuffield studies have taken a cursory look at this subject from time to time, but usually finding no evidence of significance. Butler (1955), found no evidence that Bevanite candidates fared worse than more moderate Labour candidates. Steed (1971) found no evidence that pro Powellite candidates[42] did better than other Conservative. Curtice and Steed (1997) found no evidence that Eurosceptic Conservative candidates did better than their peers, and Curtice et al. (2005), find no significance on MPs positioning on the Iraq War.

Pattie et al. (1994), found some limited evidence that voting records had an impact on Tory MPs performances at the 1992 election. They looked at six controversial divisions in the House of Commons during the 87/92 session, populist issues - the Mates amendment on the poll tax 1988 and the death penalty vote 1988; moral issues - embryo research vote 1990; abortion vote 1990; and other issues – televising the Commons 1990, and the War Crimes Bill of 1990. They found that Conservative MPs who had supported the restoration of hanging, a populist issue, and those who had voted to oppose the full implementation of the poll tax had outperformed their colleagues on a flow of the vote analysis. However the analysis did not control for incumbency in general or other factors such as region.

Norris et al. (1992) cited in section 2.4, used data from the candidate questionnaire that incumbent MPs and challenger candidates were encouraged to complete ahead of that election. Responses to ideology questions were compared to performance to see if incumbents and candidates professing a radical or moderate version of their party's platform did better or worse than others. The result was that there was no significant effect from candidate ideology.

Vivyan and Wagner (2012) use individual level data from the 2005 British Election Study to assess whether the overall rebelliousness of Labour MPs and also their votes in specific controversial matters would make a difference as to the probability that their constituents voted for them. They found rebelliousness significant and positive for voters and especially so when an interactive term was added to account for the voters' opinion of Blair. Thus rebellious Labour MPs did especially well with voters with a low opinion of Blair in comparison to their loyalist colleagues. However, on the specific vote on the Iraq War, there was no evidence that a rebel vote had a positive impact on voters' preferences, thus agreeing with the evidence from the macro election result data approach that there is very little evidence that the division 'roll-call' on Iraq made any difference.

3.3 Partisan dealignment and depolarization

Partisan dealignment

The Michigan authors based their work on Congress on the 1958 Mid Term elections, but an irony came to pass in that by the time the authors' work took over as the orthodoxy in the mid sixties, some of the assumptions they had made about partisan ID of the voters being the one and only cue, the composition of the electorate had already started to shift. Cover (1977) noted that during the 1960s, the proportion of the electorate describing themselves as strong partisans of either party sharply declined, with the proportion of those considering themselves more weakly attached to one of the two parties, and those attached to neither increasing. Cover argued that this was one key factor in explaining the apparent increase in the incumbency advantage in the 1960s since voters with a weaker partisan attachment would be more likely to be lured to vote for an incumbent of the other party of whom they approved. This is the so-called compositional theme.

The second theme was behavioural change with some authors arguing that voters of all strengths of partisan ID were in the process of changing such that there was a greater likelihood of strong Republican or Democrat partisans voting for an incumbent of the other party in 1970 than would have been the case in 1958. Ferejohn (1977), argued that there had been a drift away from party in the 1960s with not just incumbency, but other cues, such as the relative popularity of the President and Congress that made the change.

Cover (1977) used survey data to show the number of voters describing themselves as having no partisan identification jumped from 8.2% to 13.1% from 1964 to 1970. He noted that additionally, voters who identified themselves as *strong supporters* of either party were much more likely to defect in the 1970s than they had been in the 1950s. The number of strong supporters prepared to defect to the opposite party rose from 4.6% to 14.7%. In addition, in districts where there was an incumbent re-standing, the proportion of defections in the direction of the incumbent went from 56.6% to 83.2% from 1958 to 1972. So at the 1972 election, in incumbent seats, six times more opposition identifying votes defected to the incumbent than of the incumbent's own party identifiers defecting to the challenger.

Krehbiel and Wright (1983), are critical of the voter composition change element being the most important factor to explain the rise of incumbency, preferring the behavioural change analysis. They argue that the increase in opposition voters defecting to the incumbent was because the incumbents had begun to perform more efficiently. Assessing the relative importance of the decline in partisanship and the increase of the rate of defections amongst partisans to the incumbent, they argue that the roughly 75% of the improvement in incumbency advantage comes from factors to do with the performance of the incumbents and only 25% from the change in voter composition. Fiorina (1977a) argued against voter partisan de-alignment as an important factor, noting that although voters were less party oriented, they were no less ideological. Additionally, he asked since

part of the process of voter de-alignment had made voters become more cynical about Government, why would this have led them to support incumbents?

Party depolarization

Burnham (1975) was first to blame a decline in polarization of the parties, showing that in the 1969-71 session of Congress, the difference between the two parties had dropped to the lowest levels since the 1850. Looking at several sessions at a time, his index of policy dissimilarity on roll call votes fell from peaks of 0.625 and 0.529 in the 1895-1911 and 1933-9 periods, to just 0.357 in the 1953-63 period and 0.25 in the 1965-71 period. He blamed the lack of policy difference between the two parties for decreasing turnout in midterm elections, levels which dropped to just over 40% in the 1974 election from an average of just over 50% between 1950 and 1970.

Collie (1989) developed Burnham's argument about depolarization demonstrating how things continued to change into the 1980s. She argued that voters were responding to changes in the ways that Congress members behave in the House. Additionally to the previously mentioned reduction in policy differences in roll-call votes, she suggested that there has been a change in the way that Congress operated such that there are fewer party-line votes, and more consensus votes. That encouraged an increased individualization of voting by members of Congress and as they have edged away from party discipline, voters have responded accordingly. Collie concedes that the cause-effect may even run both ways, if members of Congress see that they can gain an advantage from voters by distancing themselves from parties, then they are more likely to go out of their way to do it.

The Burnham and Collie view that depolarization led to an increase in the incumbency advantage was being challenged by the fact that the substantial increase in polarization in the 1990s was not being accompanied by a decline in incumbency advantage, back to the levels seen in the 1950s. Jacobson (2009) and Fiorina and Abrams (2009) both show polarization between the two parties in the House increased substantially after the Republicans took control of the House for the first time in 40 years at the 1994 midterm elections, but initially without any decline in the value of incumbency. Both articles suggest that the depolarization in the 1960s – 1980s may have been against the historical norm. Jacobson estimated the value of incumbency under slurge to have been 5.8% on average between 1990 and 2006 against 7.2% for 1966-84, slightly lower, but not taking incumbency advantage back to levels seen in the 1950s.

Changes in the 2010s give fresh evidence for polarization but against party ID

By the 2014 midterm elections, declines in incumbency had worsened to some of the lowest levels for 50 years. Jacobson (2015) noted that the value of House incumbency had suddenly dropped with his estimates for the 2014 being that it was only worth 3.5% of the vote, the lowest since the 1946-64 period. In this article, he did blame the further increase in polarization, which had taken place since 2006, and indeed was at unprecedented levels. Abramowitz and Webster

(2016) note that as well as the House and Senate becoming more polarized, other institutions such as the Supreme Court are following a similar trend with liberal and conservative justices noticeably more aligned against one another. Voters are responding to party as a much more important cue than at any time since the 1950s. The proportion of voters voting for the same party for the Presidential and House election reached 89% in 2012 breaking a previous record from 1952. Despite this, they show that the party identification expressed by voters in the National Election Survey had dropped to its lowest ever levels with just 63% of American voters expressing a preference. This presents a problem since whilst voters claim to be less partisan than they were in the 1950s, their actual behaviour suggests the reverse.

Implications for the UK

Sections 4.5 and 4.6 <below> in the next chapter give a thorough account of the changes in partisan ID and party policy polarization experienced in the UK during the period. Like in the US, the proportion of voters expressing to the British Election Survey expressing a view that they identify strongly, (or indeed at all), with one of the parties has dropped over the period. There has also been a change in the polarization over the period, with Keynesian and later neo-liberal consensuses in the 1950-60s and 1990s-2010 respectively, with a more polarized period in the 1970-80s. There has been no attempt to assess whether incumbency had been affected by any of this and so this presents a gap in the literature that this author will fill. The details of these will be laid out in detail in chapters 4 and 5.

3.4 Collaborative Gerrymandering

Erikson's second suggestion to explain the increase in incumbency advantage was the possibility that Congress members could collude to gerrymander districts in their favour. The Supreme Court decisions of the early 1960s against deliberate malapportionment such that districts were not of equal size, meant that a large number of states needed to amend their districts in the mid 1960s. It was also suggested by Tufte (1973) that the incumbents have the power to influence the state legislature, which redraws or approves the redrawing of the boundaries. If two Congress members of opposing parties work together to swap unfavourable areas, this will make both of them safer and could also be palatable to the state legislature as of course it would be seen to be bi-partisan and uncontroversial. He argued that this collusion might well be responsible for the apparent decline in the number of marginal seats. In the 1950s the distribution of party votes within the house districts was unimodal (excluding uncontested seats), with the peak in the middle. However, Tufte shows that by the late 1960s the distribution becomes bi-modal with comparatively few seats in the 45-55% range for the two parties.

The gerrymandering explanation for an increase in incumbency power, and reduction in marginal seats, has not received a lot of support from US writers. Cover (1977), looked at evidence that redistricting helped incumbents. He found that during the 1960-1970 period in 252 cases of redistricting, the incumbent

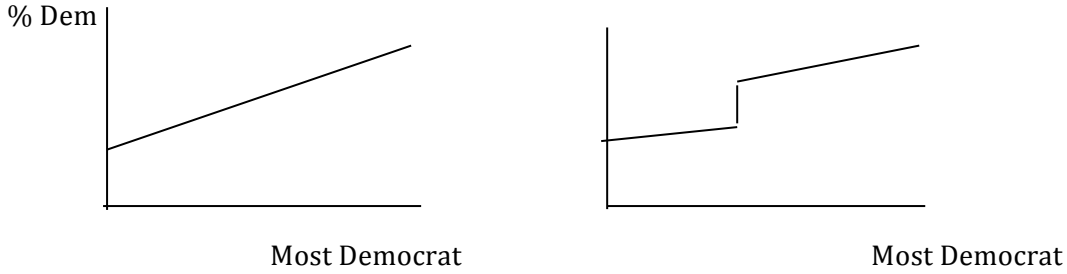
did better at the next election, than the party mean in 158 cases, (62.7%), whereas in un-redistricted constituencies, the incumbent did better than his party in 536 of 897 cases where he re-stood, (59.2%). He argued that this was not good enough evidence to add weight to the argument, although it remained plausible. Mayhew (1974b) and Fiorina (1989) pointed out that although the number of marginal seats appeared to decline, the gerrymandering argument was undermined by the fact that there wasn't the same decline in marginality when it came to the presidential vote in each district. Fiorina argued that there was also no additional decline in marginal seats in states that had redistricting in the 1960s than in those states that did not redistrict. He also points out that incumbency advantage for Senators had increased from 4% to 12% of the vote from the 1950s to the 1980s, and since Senators represent statewide, there can be no redistricting explanation. Additionally, Ferejohn (1977) argues that Tufte had made a serious mistake in failing to provide any a priori evidence that incumbents in the 1970s would be more able to engage in gerrymandering than they were in the 1950s. He points out that given new legislation designed to prevent unfairness and abuse should have reduced the problem, ergo, there is really no reason that incumbents would find it easier to collude with other Congress members in the 1970s than it had been before the legislation.

One shot in the arm for the gerrymandering argument, which came later, comes from so called "minority-majority" district, which have produced by later redistricting, notably the 1990/1992 round (Jacobson, 2000). Democrats with significant African American or other minority ethnic communities have been seen to collude with Republicans to create constituencies with large non-white majorities. The creation of minority-majority seats was not considered unethical under the earlier right to vote legislation, since the aim was to give minorities overwhelming influence a few selected districts rather than being diluted over many. Whilst it has had the effect of allowing African American groups to dominate certain districts, it has come at the cost of helping Republicans in neighbouring seats (making these safer), by taking the largely Democrat voting African Americans out of these neighbouring seats (Clayton, 2000).

The 2000-2 redistricting in California has widely been accused of a deliberate co-operative gerrymander. Jacobson (2009), shows that in the in the 1992-2000 election cycle, the competitive districts which both parties had won at least once, all had voter registrations in the range of 46-56% Democrat. However, after the reapportionment and boundary changes, there were now no seats at all in that range, diagrammatically there is a clear break between GOP seats and Democrat seats. He pointed out that the gerrymander was extremely successful for incumbents of both parties, between 2002-06 only one seat changed hands (11th), and that was due to a scandal. The diagram below shows the kink in the curve of the partisan makeup as seats are ranked from being most Republican (left) to most Democrat (right). Post redistricting, 50-50 districts were eliminated.

% Democrat registration ranked in district order in California Congressional districts

Seats pre 2002 Seats post 2002 redistribution



Adapted from Jacobson (2009 | 10-11)

Abramowitz et al. (2006), remain sceptical about gerrymandering as an explanation for the decline in marginal districts, they concede that the infamous California 2002 redistricting plan might well have been responsible for reducing the number of marginal seats from eleven to four, but they say, the Golden State aside, there is not much empirical evidence supporting the theory. They show that there had been a steady decline in the numbers of marginal seats from the 1946 – 50 period onwards all the way to 2004. If gerrymandering had been responsible, then one would expect to see an acceleration in the decline in marginal seats in elections in years ending in 2, but that there was no such evidence, and additionally, there appeared to be no evidence that states which had seen their districts reapportioned on a bi-partisan basis had seen any additional decline in the numbers of marginal seats than those who had been done by a single party. They argue that the most likely explanation was due to socio-demographic factors caused by internal population movements, immigration, local areas become more homogenous, such that Republican areas became more Republican and Democrat (inner cities) became more Democrat.

Friedman and Holden (2009), tested the re-election rate of incumbents (as opposed to the number of marginal seats in (Abramowitz et al., 2006)), against the effects of redistricting each decade from the 1920s. They added controls for the party in Government, whether the incumbent was a freshman, and whether the election was a Presidential year or not. The authors found that all the redistricting rounds were insignificant, except for those of the 1930s, and the 1990s, which actually had a negative effect on the incumbent re-election rate. The authors suggest two possible explanations for the findings; they suggested that there is a possibility that despite the advances in technology, that redistricting state legislators may still not really know what they are doing properly to be successful; and the increase in judicial activism over redistricting has prevented potential gerrymanders from succeeding.

Boundary changes in the UK

Rossiter et al. (1999) devote an entire book to the boundary review process in the UK. Their thesis is that whilst there is 'a gerrymander' in the UK in the sense that groups of voters end up less influential votes than others, there is very little evidence of active gerrymandering. The UK's process for boundary reviews gives the responsibility for drawing the constituency boundaries of each nation of the UK to an independent Boundary Commission. The process involves the Commission first producing provisional recommendations followed by local

inquiries, written and oral hearings, and then presenting its final recommendations on the basis of the consultations. The consultation phase does give political organizations and interested individuals the opportunity to make counterproposals, which could benefit them, but these proposals have to be based on and backed up with evidence that they would make for better representation rather than political advantage. The fact that the Commissioners have to use local Government wards as their building blocks prevent the creation of the some of the outrageously shaped districts seen in the US, and also limits the number of realistic permutations.

In theory a pair of neighbouring incumbent Conservative and Labour MPs could collude to make a joint proposal to the Commission suggesting a swap of wards making them both safer. However, in practice the authors show that the for the Fourth Review in the 1990s, which the book focussed on, the two major parties centralized their response to boundary reviews in order to attempt to make the best possible national picture for their party. The book states that both parties made use of their whips teams to discipline any recalcitrant MPs.

McLean (2008) broadly agrees with the Rossiter thesis that political parties will ultimately put the national picture over the interests of their incumbent MPs, manufacturing arguments about local ties in order to get their way with reviews. An MP might want to keep their seat safe, but their party's leadership will be willing to risk their seat turning into a marginal by moving voters into a neighbouring seat, which could then become winnable. He argues though, that where incumbents could have an impact, is by delaying the review process so much, or in the case of Labour Government in 1969, delaying even the start of the review process. He notes that the UK system is unusually slow in redrawing boundaries such that an election fought in 2014 would be likely to be fought the basis of voter numbers from 2000.[43]

3.5 Incumbent advantage from increasing office perks

Mayhew's second 1974 article suggested that Congress members were making better use of the perks of office, particularly in terms of communication with constituents, and that this might be another good explanation of the increase in the incumbency advantage (Mayhew, 1974b). He points out that between 1954 and 1970, mail flows from Congress sextupled. Whilst the content of official Congressional mailshots are not meant to be partisan and election based, and whether or not it can be proven that they assist with re-election, there is no doubt at all that Congress members are behaving as if this is indeed the case. As Mayhew shows, the peak months for letters from Congress members were in September and October of even numbered years. Cover agrees with Mayhew that these free mailing perks could well be giving incumbents a significant advantage. He points out at by 1977, incumbents had unlimited free first class surface postage, there was even a folding-room in Congress for stuffing letters into envelopes (Cover, 1977). However, like Mayhew he agrees it is tough to prove the assertion empirically. Ferejohn (1977), is much more sceptical about the value of these mail-shots on the re-election chances of Congress members. He points out that the increase in Congressional publications has failed to give

Congress members any additional name recognition than they had in the 1950s. He presents survey on name recognition of House incumbents at each election from the 1950s to 1970, name recognition was roughly constant, at around the mid-fifties percent in off-years and the low sixties percent in Presidential-election years.

There is mixed empirical evidence on the value of postage, Cover (1980) shows that members of Congress certainly appear to *behave* as if it is important. Cover used interviews of 150 Congressional offices in the 1973/4 session to ask how many letters and questionnaires were sent out per constituent, the mean was 3.7. The numbers of letters sent out was positively, and significantly correlated with marginality, those with majorities smaller than 10% sent an average of 4.95 letters, those in the safest seats with majorities above 60% sent just 1.87 letters. The dependent variable of letters sent was compared against seniority and marginality, both were significant, an increase of 10% in a Congress member's majority would reduce letters sent per constituent by 0.3 letters per year.

Using individual data from a survey of voters, Cover and Brumberg (1982), sought to prove that voters who receive a specific franked Government publication from their Congress member were more likely to vote them. They look at the effect of Congress members sending the popular 72 page document *Infant Care*, which was designed to give Government advice about care for new-born babies, the authors stated that from its initial publication in 1914, *Infant Care* and its updated editions were sent to 59 million American families (Cover and Brumberg, 1982). The authors pointed out that many Congressional offices gathered data from hospitals about newborns so that they could send them the document with a best wishes note signed by the Congress member. They surveyed 250 families who had received such an unsolicited package from their Congress member against a control who had not received it. They found that the group which had received the free copy of Infant Care were much more inclined to give a very good rating for their incumbent Congress member than non recipients, and that independent or opposition partisans in this group were much more likely to vote for the incumbent than such voters in the control group. The effects therefore of the free mail were very much concentrated on attracting opposition partisan voters.

Other authors focussed on some of the additional office funding that Congress members had awarded themselves in the 1960s and 1970s. Fiorina (1989), shows that in the early 1960s, Congress members had a budget of $20,000 to employ up to nine office staff at taxpayers' expense. By 1977 it was eighteen staff at a maximum cost of $220,000, giving Congress members a significant office advantage over any challenger. He adds that Congress members' trips home to "press the flesh" increased from three in 1960 to twenty-six per year in 1977. Fenno (1978) noted that there was a clear negative correlation between trips home and seniority, such that junior Congress members were returning home far more, controlling for region and marginality and suggested that this could be evidence of a career life-cycle process going on (see style section.) This finding by Fenno could also be evidence for Fiorina's new breed hypothesis. The empirical evidence as to whether these additional allowances which grew so

much in the 1960s and 1970s have had a direct effect is not very convincing. However, additional staff may have had the side effect of assisting Congress members in their constituency service role. Large numbers of staff in the home district could assist with the increase in casework that members of the public were requesting their member to perform.

UK empirical work

Section 2.5.5 reviewed the literature discussing the extent to which MPs role had changed specifically with regards to constituent contact, but empirical work is thin on the ground. Johnston and Pattie (2009) produced a study on data from the 2005 election looking to see if there was any correlation between the amount that incumbent MPs of all parties spent on House of Commons stationary and postage, and the change in the vote in their constituency between 2001 and 2005 to see if there was a positive correlation in the amount spent on constituency contact and their performance at the 2005 election. They found a positive and significant correlation for Tory MPs but there was no significant correlation for the other parties.

3.6 Constituency service and style of representation

Constituency service

Morris Fiorina is known for his focus on the increase in constituency service performed by members of Congress since the 1950s and he has additionally suggested that there is evidence that Congress members elected since the 1960s have been behaving significantly differently enough from their predecessors to suggest a kind of new breed of Congress members has emerged (Herrera and Yawn, 1999). Fiorina takes the view that Congress members have to be seen to help members of the public in their battle with the bureaucracy. Fiorina's main conjecture is that since the size of the bureaucracy has grown and the state does more, (e.g. the expansion of the state under the Johnson "Great Society"), and therefore the importance of the constituency service element of a Congress member's role has grown significantly. A key component of the argument is that as the size of a state has increased, the opportunities for a Congress member to help constituents have grown. Like UK MPs, a Congress member's role includes that of an outlet to which constituents can contact to address grievances. With the state taking on roles such as welfare, Medicaid etc., it has given whole new areas for those voters who feel unfairly treated, to contact their member to ask for their assistance in their dispute or queries with bureaucrats. His key point is that as the state has become more activist, the activities of Congress members have moved away from programmatic activities such discussing legislation and oversight, and more activity has gone into case work and pork-barrel politics (Fiorina, 1977b). He pointed out that a good Congress member who helps his or her constituents might be more valuable to them than their party label or voting record in the chamber:

In legislative matters he is merely one vote in 435, but in bureaucratic matters he is a benevolent, non-partisan power, and if more and more citizens come to think of

their Congressman in this manner, then the basis of the incumbent effect is obvious. Experience in Washington, and Congressional seniority count when dealing with the bureaucracy. So long as the incumbent can elude a personal morality rap and refrain from casting outlandish votes, he is naturally preferred over a newcomer. This morality effect is not understandable, it is rational." (Fiorina, 1989)

Fiorina's second key argument was that a new breed of Congress member had emerged since the 1950s. He argued that this new cohort was much more open to constituency service that they changed the way they presented themselves to the public, and whereas Congress members at the 1958 election might stress his party or policies, a Congress member at the 1970 election was much more likely to signal to voters their efforts on behalf of constituents. Some Congress members had even been seen soliciting for casework (Fiorina, 1977a). In addition, he argues that the electoral upheavals in the 1960s, (one-third of members of the House being replaced from the 88th to the 90th Congress), accelerated the process, since the newer members may have been more open to taking up the constituency service role, than those more traditional members they replaced. He further offers the theory that the more constituency service oriented Congress member of the 1970s were able to entrench themselves better and that this meant the 1970s was a more stable decade in terms of Congressional makeup after the volatility of the 1960s.

Fiorina and Ferejohn's collaboration with Bruce Cain, produced a series of articles and a book, *The Personal Vote* (Cain et al., 1987), comparing constituency service in the UK and the US. Their study on the UK 1979 general election and US 1980 House election, (Cain et al., 1984), unsurprisingly found very much more powerful incumbency effects at work in the House election than in the UK election but nevertheless provides useful analysis of their thesis on the constituency service model for both countries. The 1980 National Election Survey of voters ex-post facto responses to how and why they voted as it did, was tested against voter responses for their party alignment, their perceptions about the attributes of the candidates in the district, (incumbent and/or challengers), and a control for the voter approval of the Carter Administration. The authors found that factors such as incumbent personal and media contact as well as a perception of the incumbent performing a good job on casework were positive with a highly significant coefficient. Voters from the other party were more likely to vote for an incumbent of the opposition party where they felt that the incumbent had done a good job, or could be expected to be very helpful.

Campbell (1983) used survey data from the 1978 and 1980 elections to see how voters' opinions of fourteen newly elected Congress members ("new fourteen") changed from since the 1978 election, when they were challengers in open seats, to the 1980 election when they re-stood for election for the first time. These survey answers from the National Election Survey were compared against a control group of ninety-four continuing incumbents. Campbell argued that a name recognition advantage is not a feature of incumbency, but a prerequisite for winning, finding at the 1978 election, the control group of ninety-four incumbents elected in 1978 and re-standing in 1980 had a 52% name recognition rate, in the open seats, the fourteen had recognition rates of 51%,

beating their opponents whose mean was 39%. When voters who had voted for the winning candidates (i.e. the new-fourteen and control group), were asked to explain what they most liked about their candidate of choice, the new fourteen started out with the public giving the answer of *personal attributes* (46% of cases versus 26% of the control group). However, on their re-election in 1980, the proportion naming personal attributes had fallen to 25% against 24% for the control group. The proportion choosing *experience* jumped 12% to make it the most popular at 26%, whilst *district attentiveness* increasing from zero to 13%. District attentiveness was selected by 30% of those voting for the control group. What this perhaps shows is that it takes more than a single term for a new Congress member to establish their full reputation for servicing the district, but it nonetheless shows the importance of constituency service in the electorate's mind.

Romero and Sanders (1994) used panel data from the 1972-76 elections to test if incumbents are rewarded by voters, for their efforts in constituency service. The data for this survey asked the same voters the same questions at each election, one of the critical ones being party identification. This meant that groups of voters whose partisan ID had weakened (e.g. from "strong GOP" to "weak GOP", or "weak Dem" to "independent") from 1972 to 1976 could be looked at to see if there were any special changes. They assessed the incumbent's behaviour on a three point scale, low, medium, high on the basis of the number of casework oriented staff, from the overall number of staff, and on the number of bills they had sponsored or co-sponsored. When the 1976 post election survey was run against the behaviour dummies, all three were positive. The authors show that votes whose partisan preferences had loosened were much more inclined to vote for the incumbent than those whose preferences were unchanged. They argued that with the context controlled, Congress members could expect to be rewarded by voters from strong performance in constituency service.

Empirical based criticism of the Fiorina constituency service model comes from Johannes and McAdams (1981) and McAdams and Johannes (1981). They interviewed 117 incumbent Congress members to assess their load of casework; they found that the median Congressional office dealt with 100 cases per week, and mean of 115. They tested the dependent variable of the 1978 re-running incumbent Congress members' vote share against this caseload variable, controlling for seniority, party, education of voters in the district, a baseline of; either national-swing or party ID in the district or 1976 vote share, (three models were run); and an additional variable of the Congress member's ideological difference with the constituency. This discrepancy variable was produced by looking at the vote for George McGovern at the 1972 in the district (as a measure of liberalism in the district), and producing an expected ADA score from the equation -20.04 + 1.79% McGovern vote (Johannes and McAdams, 1981). The expected ADA of the district was compared with the Congress member's real ADA score to produce the discrepancy variable, the hypothesis being that a larger discrepancy would be negative on the Congress member's re-election prospects. The results of the regressions showed that as expected the discrepancy variable was negative and significant; however the caseload variable was also negative, in all three models, such that those members who did more

casework performed less well at the 1978 election. They conclude that their study shows that Fiorina's hypothesis about casework and constituency service is not backed up by empirical evidence (Johannes and McAdams, 1981).

There was a response to this, Fiorina (1981), which pointed out that the conclusions from the authors were implausible intuitively. Fiorina claimed that there was a cause-effect problem with Johannes and McAdams' work, giving the examples of Abner Mikver (D-Ill), who spent $385,000, and William Natcher (D – KY) who spent just $20.00. Natcher was unopposed whilst Mikver was expecting, and got a very close fight (Fiorina, 1981). As he points out, that using money spent against vote share in this election using these two districts would produce a nonsense result. He argued that individual level data, such that in the then unpublished, but well underway (Cain et al., 1984), study which showed that evidence that voters were likely to be more inclined an incumbent who they expected would be helpful in terms of constituency service. He argued that time series data might need to be run to get accurate results on constituency service at the aggregate level. There was a response to his response, McAdams and Johannes (1981), which stressed that there were additional problems with Fiorina's hypothesis. They said that whilst Fiorina and (indeed Fenno – see below) might expect Congress members in safe seats[44] to be less worried about constituency service than others, in reality, Congress members may have imperfect knowledge about their relative safety. Furthermore, his assumption of their rationality might well be flawed, arguing that Congress members might be overly risk-averse or even act like "nervous Nellies."

Another article about the methodological problems of proving the electoral value of constituency service, using aggregate level data comes from King (1991). He did not have a problem with Fiorina's intuitive arguments, but noted how difficult it had been to prove. He argues that it does not make sense to use the incumbent Congress member's vote share as the dependent variable like Johannes and McAdams (1981) when testing against constituency service. In this equation, it is actually a biased variable, because a Congress member will be well aware when things are going wrong and may choose to up their service record in order to offset this worsening of local situation. For example, in such a case, the Congress member might well successfully use constituency service to assist in his re-election campaign, and actually do better than he would otherwise have done. However, because the base situation in the district was weak in the first place, it might appear that in fact his efforts for constituency service produced negligible or even negative results. Since we are unable to run two elections, one with him having done the work and one without, an alternative method is required. Thus he argues what is needed is to find a value for incumbency and then work out what share of this constituency service makes, since using vote share will bias constituency service to the downside.

Fiorina got support for his theory of the new generation of Congress member from Born (1979). He argued that new generations of incumbents, far from being the passive beneficiaries of a breakdown in partisanship, have actively been on the hunt to find new ways of securing their Congressional tenures. He looked at the performance of new and veteran incumbents in the 1952 – 1974

period, noting the fact that the size of the sophomore surge had increased by on average 0.6% per election from 1964 to 1974. He argued that if the sophomore surge indicates the size of the incumbency advantage, then one might expect older incumbents who had had a smaller incumbency bonus when they first entered the House to "catch up" with their newer colleagues, and get an additional surge themselves in the 1964-74 period, during which the value of incumbency increased. If the reason for the increase was purely voter led, such as due to partisan breakdown, then it this would make full sense. However, he argued that since this catch-up effect was pretty much absent, it must be good evidence to suggest that the newer incumbents of the 1960s were simply doing much better (in terms of the re-election game) than their older colleagues.

Herrera and Yawn (1999), re-opened the data from the 1958 election used in the Michigan model. They pointed out that despite it being available for forty years, no one had looked at it to test the Fiorina's hypothesis of a generational replacement amongst Congress members. They looked at the answers given by the incumbent Congress member to assess the extent to which they stress the importance of; constituency service; district oriented voting (as opposed to party voting); and emphasis on personal attributes. They then tested these as the dependent variables in regressions against, the Generation of the Congress member (1) if later than 1946 and (0) if first elected before 1946, and a series of controls such as district heterogeneity, party, region and district type (urban/rural). The generation dummy was strongly significant indicating that newer members of Congress were more constituency service oriented and supporting Fiorina's new breed hypothesis. They concede that it could appear to support Fenno's life-cycle hypothesis *(see below)*, but state that there is further evidence to suggest that the new breed hypothesis is the better answer. They point to one piece of information in the data which was 121 of the respondents indicated that there had been a change over the previous few elections in that personal attributes were now much more important than they previously had been. Additionally, it was those who had been elected prior to 1950 who had detected a larger change in the relative importance of personality over party.

Style of Representation

Richard Fenno's book *Home Style* (Fenno, 1978), is unusual in the Congressional literature in that it is very much a qualitative work, largely consisting of Fenno's interviews with a number of members of Congress in the mid 1970s as he assessed how they worked their districts (Hibbing, 2003). Fenno comes up with two key hypotheses; a career life-cycle model of Congress member's representation; and that Congress members adopt a home-style of representation to suit their district. Like Mayhew and other authors, Fenno believes that Congress members are rational re-election seekers, he argued that member's careers go in two phases, the *expansionis*t and *protectionist* phase. During the expansionist phase the member will try to build up and maximise their vote by reaching out to their constituents and building up a suitable support base. Members in safe districts are compelled to build up this coalition of support since they face the potential of a primary challenge from their own party if they leave their base too far behind. In the early stages of their careers,

the opportunity cost of the spending time in the district will be much lower, since the Congress member will have to wait some time to gain a place on influential committees. During the protectionist phase, the Congress member will do enough in their district in order to try to ensure re-election, but will try to spend the credit he has built up in Washington in order to pursue legislative or other goals.

Fenno additionally showed that Congress members would present themselves in a number of different ways depending on the socioeconomic makeup of their district. He argued that the home style adopted by each Congress member is can be summed up by how they present themselves to their constituents, how they explain their Washington activities and how they allocate their resources, (including their own time). Fenno's interviews and time embedded with a series of Congress members attempt to show why tailoring the Congress member's representation style to the constituency could be important. One key area which is noted is the heterogeneity of the district, for example, his *Congressman E*, who represented a very marginal and heterogeneous district avoids being too ideological and focuses himself on constituency service, helping his constituents and attempting to show his work fighting for them in Washington. This Congress member was keen to be seen to be available to his constituents holding office hours. His *Congressman A* representing a largely rural homogenous district adopts a person-to-person style, talking to people and taking a much more traditional approach to campaigning. *Congressman F,* representing a majority African American district presents a home-style role as a community leader, and stressing his work in serving African Americans. Unlike the representatives in more heterogeneous districts, Congressman F was unafraid to try to educate his constituents and to some extent preach to them about the importance of political activism. Fenno notes that F avoids the constituency service and office hours approach that E attempts, focussing on the politics of his representation.

Fenno made it clear that his conjecture on career lifecycle model isn't mutually exclusive to Fiorina's new breed model. He noted the difference between freshman and senior incumbents in 1967 and 1973, in terms of trips home. Freshmen in both samples make the most trips home, but the surviving 1967 freshmen who are then re-interviewed in 1973 are making considerably more trips home than similar cohorts in 1967 had been. He argues that a mixture of conversion and replacement was taking place, that some of this change was Fiorina's new breed, whilst some was due to a portion of veteran members changing their representation style. Fenno does note some ironies in his data such the fact that trips home and district staff allocation do not appear to be correlated with marginality of the district as one might expect. He also notes the apparent popularity of individual Congress members despite the unpopularity of the institution itself, but part of this involved them criticizing the institution whilst at home in the district. He states that everyone of the eighteen Congress members sought to in some way deprecate it to their constituents whilst distancing themselves from the perceived negative qualities of the institution. In some extreme cases Fenno argued that some incumbents made "running against Congress" as part of the home style and used its unpopularity for their own personal gain.

Looking into Fenno's question about why the voters seem to like their Congress member but not the institution, were Parker and Davidson (1979). They argued that the Vietnam War had done a huge amount of damage to popularity of Congress, and noted that two-thirds of voters who mentioned foreign policy as the reason for their view of Congress had negative views of the institution. They used survey data from 1968 and 1977 to assess the question, finding evidence that voters used different criteria for judging the institution than for judging their individual member. Whilst over half of voters in both surveys gave policy as their most important issue with which to evaluate Congress, for individual members, policy was a low 11.2% in 1968 and a minimal 3% in the 1977 survey. The majority of voters in both survey's appeared to evaluate their member on the back of two criteria; constituency service and personal attributes (Parker and Davidson, 1979). This ties in rather nicely with what Fiorina (1989) was suggesting that on policy, their Congress member is but one in 435, but in constituency service the member is of great importance.

Fenno is not unique in focussing on style of representation, an earlier author, Dexter (1957), argued that Congress members appeared consciously or subconsciously to choose whether their focus was towards their district, region or nation. Dexter looked at attitudes over reciprocal trade in the 1950s, he pointed to the fact that Congress members in the South were typically more open to free trade due to their dependence on agricultural exports, whereas those from the north were more inclined to favour protecting manufacturing industries from imports from abroad. Dexter interviewed Congress members over their attitudes towards the 1955 vote on extending reciprocal trade and found a number of types of activity. One group of Congress members sought to be leaders, to try to educate the voters towards their viewpoint and explain why they were going to vote the way they were, whilst a second group, the ideologues, were going to vote on their own principals, even where they were in the minority view in their districts. A third group wanted re-election and voted against their principals due pressure from constituents. He notes that pressure from groups like the Farm Bureau was applied most heavily to inexperienced Congress members.

Eulau et al. (1959), looked at style and focus of a Congress member's representation. They looked back at Edmund Burke's seminal theory, arguing that his model of representation was combining two axes, focus and style of representation. The focus of representation could be whether the legislator followed the interest of the nation (or state – in the case of state houses) or their district, whilst the style could be that of a free agent to a mandated delegate. According to their analysis, Burke's Trustee was a free-agent acting in the national interest. The authors surveyed members of State Houses in five US States and asked them to describe their focus of representation, state, district or both, and whether they were a delegate, a trustee or something in the middle (politico). Only a small minority of respondents professed to be delegates, but out of these, almost all stated that their focus was on the district. The majority of trustees said that their focus was on statewide interests, and so the authors conclude there is a good correlation between the two axes. There was a side

point though, that they found that in marginal seats, a small majority of surveyed members (53%), claimed to be district focussed as opposed to less than one third otherwise.

Clarke et al. (1975), imitated the Eulau study, looking at Canadian provincial legislators. They used survey data from 1972 on 252 legislators which asked them about three main areas; to estimate the proportion of their working time spent on constituency service issues; asked them whether their primary responsibility was towards the constituency, province, or both; and asked whether they were delegates, trustees or politicos as defined by the Eulau study. The aim of the study was aimed to assess which types of member would focus more on constituency service. The results showed that delegates were more inclined towards constituency service matters, with 46.1% of delegates spending more than half their time on constituency matters, whilst only 23.7% of trustees did that. Likewise, constituency interest members were more inclined towards constituency service with 48.9% of such members, whereas only 18.7% of statewide oriented members focussed on constituency service matters. There was no statistically significant link between marginality and constituency service, rejecting Fiorina's view.

Anagnoson (1983), looked at how New Zealand MPs allocated time and resources comparing the findings of Fenno, and the Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina studies on the UK. His study was this was before proportional representation was introduced in 1996 which created a mixed-member proportional system with constituency and top-up list members and smashed the two party, Labour/National duopoly (Roper et al., 2004). Anagnoson argued that with UK-style single member districts, but with a low population meant that MPs were serving districts of just 20,000 voters versus 65,000 in the UK and more than quarter of a million in the US, New Zealand MPs would have a big advantage. Despite this, New Zealand MPs were only allocated half a secretary and had to do much of the casework themselves. He sampled about one-third of the ninety-two members and ran their answers about how regularly they went to their constituencies, and what proportion of their working time they spent on constituency, versus marginality, party and geographic and socioeconomic controls. Although MPs in marginal districts spent a slightly higher percentage of their time on constituency matters (3% - the overall average being 29%), than those in safe seats, when the controls were added, this was not significant.

UK literature

The UK research is extremely rich on how and why MPs adopt a representational style, but not on whether there are any electoral consequences. As sections 2.5.3-6 show, there has been a considerable variety of studies looking at how MPs seek to serve their constituents, how it has changed since the 1960s, and that like Congress members there appear to be various classes of MPs; such constituency servants, specialists and ministerial fodder. Frustratingly, there is little quantitative analysis done either on the macro election data or indeed using voter survey data to see if any of this makes a difference. The Norris et al. (1992)

did look to see if incumbents who professed that they were constituency service oriented did better at the 1992 than peers, but found no significant effect.

3.7 Weak challengers

Another area of interest in the literature is the so-called scare off effect. An incumbent's apparent advantage may be if he appears to be pretty safe and well liked, he may scare off viable and well-funded challengers in the opposition party from making a stand. It is obvious that a potential challenger faces serious financial and time opportunity costs by entering a race, and so if the potential candidate is rational, then significant barriers to entry must exist (Stone and Maisel, 2003).

One important article which looks at the first of these conjectures, was Gross and Garand (1984) study of marginal seats from 1824 – 1980. They criticize Fiorina's claims that there has been an increase in the incumbency advantage due to an increase in the bureaucracy and therefore additional constituency service activity. They argued that Fiorina's conjecture is undermined by the fact that during an earlier period when incumbency increased, the period up to 1930, there had been no such increase in the state or bureaucracy whatsoever. They also criticized worries about the decline in marginal seats, pointing out that the decrease in the proportion of marginal seats from 1886 to 1930 was similar to the proportion lost in the 1960 to 1975 period. Their preferred reason for the increase in incumbency is an increase in non-viable challengers. They suggest that part of the decline in marginal seats in the post 1960 period is due to the opposition party not putting up a serious candidate; the heterogeneity amongst challengers distorts the numbers.

Cox and Katz (1996) propose a simple acid test of whether the challenger is a high quality candidate is whether or not they have ever held elected office before. They argue that for a US House seat, a serious contender will be likely to have held office as an elected State official or perhaps a member of the State House or Senate. They find that where there has been a swing towards the incumbent party (above the national trend), and holding other factors constant,[45] then there will be a decline in the likelihood at the next election of the opposition party fielding a candidate who has ever held elected office. They argue that this indicates that a scare-off effect has occurred.

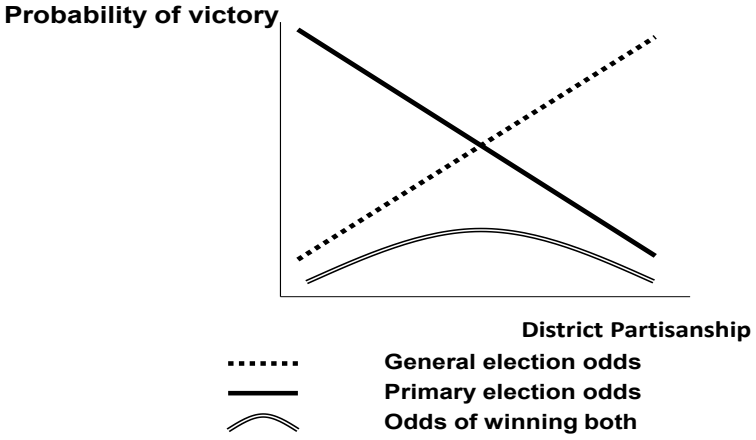
Ansolabehere and Snyder (2004) looked at the importance of various types of past experience of the candidate, whilst Cox and Katz treated all previous elected office holders equally; they gave a look at various groups of previous office holders to see what difference this made. The analysis is about election to senior statewide offices rather than the US House, but nonetheless finds some relevant results. They stated themselves that these advantages holding statewide elected office or being a member of the state House/Senate should provide advantages that feed through to elections for Federal offices. They estimate challengers for statewide offices get the following bonuses if they have held the following positions:

Previous office held	Estimated additional challenger advantage %-pt
Another s/w office	1.43 to 1.92
US House member in small state	6.89 to 8.90
US House member in large state	1.81 to 2.66

taken from (Ansolabehere and Snyder, 2004)

Stone and Maisel (2003) looked into the calculations that potential challenger candidates would make before entering a race. They suggest that the odds of winning the seat are the joint conditional probability of winning the primary and winning the general election. As partisanship in the district gets more favourable, the odds of winning the general election rise, but at the same time, the odds of actually getting the nomination are likely to drop given that more candidates from the same party are likely to stand. The authors suggest that the overall chance of winning may well be at its best where partisanship in the district is at its closest – they present the following illustration, the horizontal axis being the support for their party in the district from zero to 100%. The sweet spot for a potential candidate may be a very marginal district.

District partisanship against potential candidates election odds



Stone and Maisel also pointed out that the challenging party might gain an advantage from the primary process in gaining additional publicity for their candidate, especially if the incumbent does not face a challenge. They added it could help to make sure that the challenging party's general election candidate has the necessary skills of fundraising and campaigning.

For their empirical work on candidates, they designed a forward-looking study, which would not be biased by ex-post facto issues. They created what they called a "candidate emergence study" by contacting ten GOP and ten Democrat activists in 200 randomly selected districts to survey them to find out who would

be potential candidates for their party and the opposition party at the 1998 election. They found tentative evidence that the most marginal districts provided the best chance of a new candidate gaining office and that candidates generally acted rationally with regards to their odds of being elected and re-elected.

Implications for the UK

There are two key differences for a study of the UK system, in that there are no official primaries for candidate selection, and that there are strict constituency spending limits in the run-up to a UK election, the latter meaning that the definition of a strong candidate in the UK is not a very rich or well-funded individual who could afford to spend many millions in their district. Research on candidate selection has been reviewed in section 2.5.2 <above>. There is some evidence of candidates being selected as 'sacrificial lambs', knowing they will lose, whilst their workers will be asked to go elsewhere in order to help the party in key seats. However, at this point it becomes a party targeting issue rather than a candidate effect.

There appears to be a gap in the UK is about the potential of 'strong candidates' specifically repeat candidates who have fought the seat before, therefore, are at least somewhat known in the area, know the issues and groups to target. Chapter 5 explains how this can be incorporated into the incumbency model.

3.8 Strategic retirement bias

Ansolabhere and Snyder (2004) investigated a possible problem in measuring incumbency, the risk of bias from strategic retirements. Since studies had looked at incumbents retiring and re-standing and treating all cases of the former at face value, they could have missed out the effects of those who had felt vulnerable after a scandal or a change in the tide in the district and decide to throw in the towel, so as not to waste time and effort, or to avoid the ignominy of losing. In order to check if this strategic retirement effect could be significant, they looked at election results for state legislatures to compare states which had term limits and those which did not, in order to see if there was a major difference in the retirement slump in vote where a member of the state legislature is timed out by term limits, or stands down voluntarily. One would expect a larger retirement slump from voluntary exits than term-limited exits if this strategic retirement were to be a significant factor. However, in cases of statewide elected office they find that in fact the mean slump was actually higher (9.8%) in cases of term-limited timeouts, than voluntary exits (8.9%). For members of state legislatures the retirement slump was the same in both types of states at 5.1%. Therefore, they argued that the strategic retirement issue is unlikely to bias the estimates of incumbency in House elections by very much, if indeed anything.

Implications for the UK study

There has been no work done to assess if strategic retirement would affect incumbency in the UK. Strategic retirement would only bias the incumbency numbers if the reason for the MPs departure was specific to their constituency, or perhaps region, if MPs stand down because they think the party will do badly nationally then it would not bias the incumbency numbers. The data in chapter 5 shows clearly that more MPs do stand down ahead of elections in which they see their party losing office such as 1997 for the Conservatives and 2010 for Labour, but there is no systematic bias in the numbers from this.

A special case was the MP's expenses scandal in 2009 which led to a large number of MPs either standing down or being required by their parties to stand down after controversial claims for reimbursement from taxpayer funds. However, the MPs expenses scandal was specific to the member and there was limited evidence of lasting damage to the party in that consistency once an MP with a particularly controversial claim had retired (Curtice et al 2010). In fact, there was some anecdotal evidence as shown in chapter 1 that members such as Lembit Opik with controversial claims and who did not retire did especially badly. This would have biased the incumbency numbers *down* rather than up at the 2010 election.

3.9 Conclusions and relevance for the UK model

There are a number of good explanations in the US literature that offer ideas about why incumbency in the UK has increased from the 1950s to the 2010s, if indeed the research highlighted in Chapter 2 is indeed correct and it has increased. A common problem in UK and US literature is that empirical studies have tended to focus on a particular election rather on a series of elections as this project is attempting to do.

There are a two serious additional problems presented right away from this chapter, firstly that there has been such little quantitative work on the factors behind UK incumbency carried out that it could potentially mean adopting new and untested models. Secondly, there is going to be a difficulty in providing unbiased and objective quantitative measures of some of the factors. On the positive side, the study will be able to fill a big gap in the literature.

Looking specifically at each of the themes, name recognition can be tackled by looking at non incumbent repeat candidates, section 5.8 explains in this in more detail, but this a good proxy to use in order to test quantitative data. Constituency service and representation style is a difficult problem for this thesis to tackle with macro level election data and thus will remain outside the scope of this particular work. It is notable that studies in the US and UK on these topics are either qualitative or use individual level data. Partisan dealignment, polarization of the parties and vote decision by legislators are all the subject of empirical research in the US and to a letter extent in the UK using at least some macro election data. Chapter 5 explains how these three areas are going to be tackled. There is insufficient evidence for collaborative gerrymandering or scare off effects in the UK system to make these worthy lines for enquiry.

Chapter 4 Changes in the UK political environment 1955 – 2015

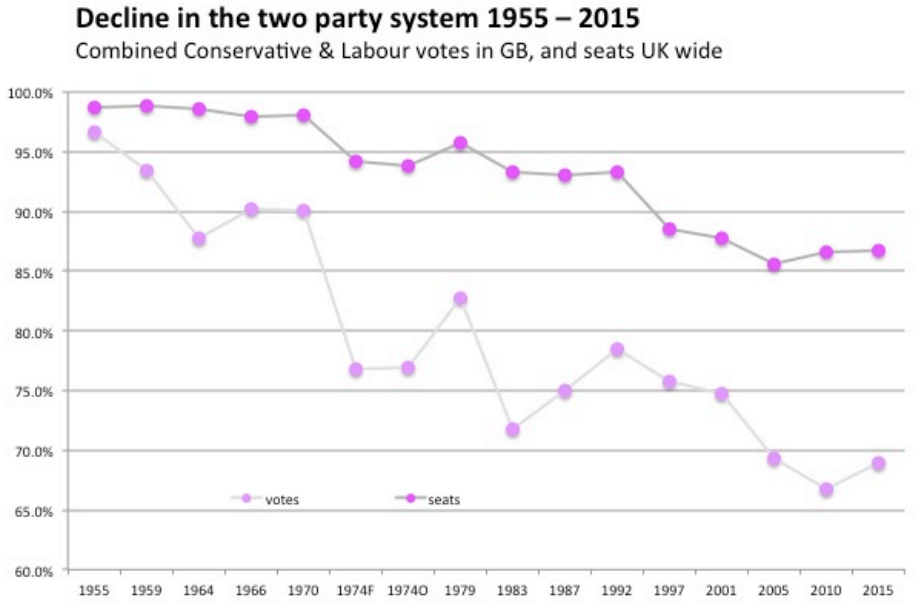
The aim of this chapter is to outline some of the changes in the changes in the political system in the United Kingdom that are relevant to a thesis on incumbency. This chapter is a quantitative analysis of the decline in the two party system and increase in the regional polarization of voter behaviour since the 1950s. This section uses data collected from the database from the thesis as well as data from *British Political Facts*,Rallings et al. (2009), to outline changes in regional voting patterns. It notes that since 1955, in relative terms the North West and Scotland have moved sharply towards Labour, whereas the Southern regions other than London have shifted towards the Conservatives. It also gives examples of such changes in sub-regions such as the City of Birmingham, exploring the fact that whilst the relative partisanship of the West Midlands between the two parties has not materially shifted since the 1950s, the City itself has moved dramatically towards Labour. The chapter has deliberately gone forward past the end of the study in 2010 to look at the 2015 data as this helps understand the trends that were underway at the time of the 2010 election.

4.1 Voting Behaviour 1955 - 2015

Decline of the two-party system

The start of the period in 1955 was at the apex of the two-party system. As the chart below demonstrates, at the 1955 election, the Conservatives and Labour between them won over 95% of the votes in Great Britain and won almost 99% of the seats UK wide. The once dominant party in the UK, the Liberals stood in only 110 of the 618 seats in Great Britain, winning only six seats and 2.7% of the total vote. The only other national party, the Communist Party of Great Britain was already in decline in the early 1950s. The party had lost the two seats at the 1950 election and at the 1955 election, it stood in only 17 seats, and won only 0.1% of the national vote (Rallings et al., 2009). Other than these there were only 25 other candidates, 11 Plaid Cymru candidates in Wales, two Scottish National Party candidates and an additional 12 assorted independence.

By the 2015 election the two-party share of the vote had declined to under 70% of the total vote and around 86% of the seats. In addition to the Liberal Democrats standing in all British constituencies other than the Speaker's seat, and the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists fielding a full slate of candidates in their nations, two parties that would have been inconceivable in the 1950s, UKIP and the Green Party fielded 620 and 570 candidates respectively.



The chart above shows the trend in votes and seats of the two main parties combined. With a couple of exceptions such as 1979 and 1992, the trend has been a near relentless decline in the Conservative-Labour duopoly of votes and seats. The first phase of this, 1955 – 69, was mainly due to a modest revival in Liberal fortunes. By-election wins in Torrington an Orpington attracted more interest in the party (Butler and King, 1965), and this enabled the increased the number of candidates fielded to 313 in 1964 (Rallings et al., 2009), with their share of the total vote increasing to a peak of 11.3% in 1964. The initial peak in seats (13) came in 1969 after a by election win in Ladywood. Despite the Liberal revival and also a modest growth in support for Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, other parties continued to do abysmally with the Communist Party, which lost much of its credibility in the wake of the Hungary crisis in 1956 (Driver, 2011), failing to gain any more than 0.1% of the vote, despite fielding more candidates than they did in 1955. There was also no extreme-right presence other than Sir Oswald Moseley, who stood, effectively as an independent, in 1959 and 1966.

The second phase of the breakdown in the two-party duopoly came at the February 1974 election. The 1970-74 Parliament saw an unprecedented seven by-election gains by third and forth parties, with five Liberals, one independent Labour, and one SNP candidate defeating the major parties. The unpopularity of the Heath Government especially after the 'U-turns' of 1972, and Labour's perceived 'lurch to the left' led to the two major parties losing considerable support across all four nations (Butler and Kavanagh, 1974) (Butler, 1995). At the February 1974 election, both major parties saw their vote share decline at the same time, Labour's declining slightly less the Conservatives' did. The main beneficiary of this, especially in England, were the Liberals, who saw their vote

share jump from 7.6% in 1966 to 19.8%, although they only won a total of 14 seats due to the disproportionality in the first past the post electoral system. In Scotland and Wales, the nationalist parties increased their vote shares to 20% and 10% respectively as demands for devolution increased (Steed, 1975). The change from 1970 to the February 1974 election was the largest drop in the two party vote at any pairs of elections as it dropped from just over 90% to just under 78%. In terms of seats, it was the first time in the series in which took the two-party total to under 95%. The October election saw a slight recovery in the two-party total vote as the Liberal vote in England dropped, but the share of seats dipped again as the SNP picked up a then record of 11 seats. Parties of the extreme-right first appeared in numbers in the 1970s with the National Front managing to pick up 0.4% of the vote in October 1974.

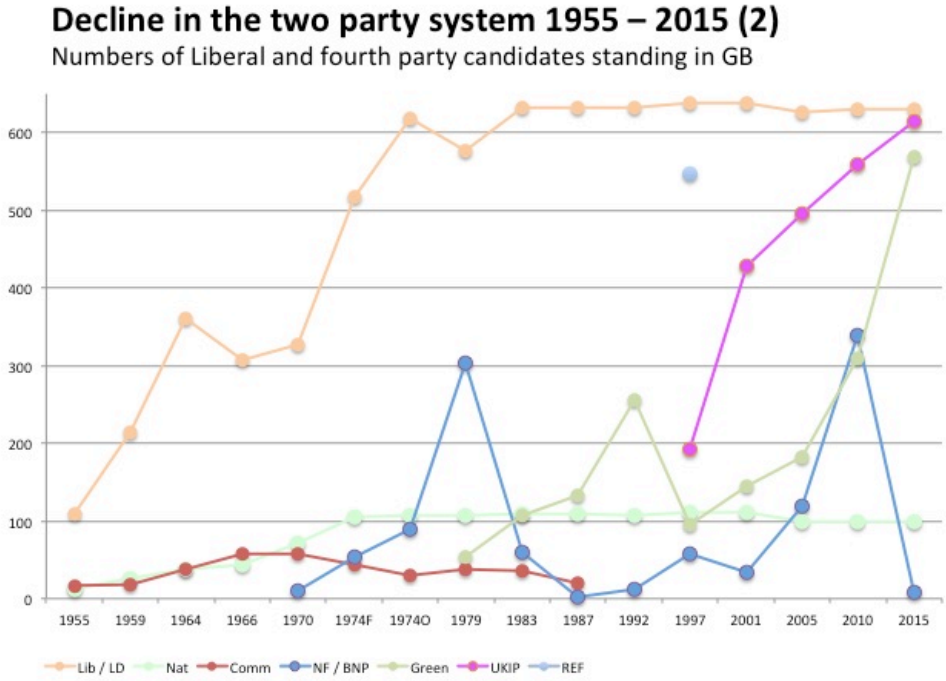
One might argue that the 1979 election was the final gasp of the two-party system with both the Liberals and the SNP seeing a major setback in both votes and seats, and the two party vote rising to just under 83%, and picking up just under 96% of the seats. The Liberals suffered a major decline in support which was put down to their support of the minority Labour Government in 1977/8 in the so called Lib-Lab pact, as well as the scandal regarding their former leader Jeremy Thorpe, who fought and lost his Devon North seat days before being due for trial. The decline in non two-party seats mainly came from the SNP who lost 9 of their 11 seats.

The realignment on the left between 1980 and 1983 when the election of Michael Foot, and then the challenge to the moderate deputy leader Dennis Healey by Tony Benn, led to the break-away SDP and was responsible for the next phase of the decline in the two-party vote. A total of 27 incumbent Labour MPs, most of who fought the 1983 election, defected to the SDP, along with a single incumbent Conservative. Labour's left-wing manifesto, which was dubbed the 'longest suicide note in history', is blamed for scaring moderate voters away from the Labour Party and in favour of the SDP-Liberal Alliance who came close to taking second place from Labour in terms of votes. Despite the personal popularity of Mrs Thatcher after the Falklands conflict and a landslide victory with a majority of 144 seats, the Conservative vote in Great Britain had in fact fallen from 44.9 to 43.5%, but it was the much larger decline in the Labour vote to just 28.3% which allowed her to win by such a large margin of seats (Butler, 1995). The 71.8% two party vote share was a new record low, although the two parties still managed to take 93% of the seats.

Although the two-party share of the vote recovered in the three elections up to and including the 1997 Labour landslide, third party seats continued to increase, especially at the 1997 election when the Liberal Democrats capitalized from the Conservative weakness, to pick up 46 seats, their best since the 1920s. Although the Liberal Democrat vote declined from the peak the Alliance achieved in 1983, it became more efficiently concentrated in areas where Labour was weak, allowing the centre party to become the main opposition to the Conservatives in these areas. The surge in Lib Dem seats in 1997 as well as some modest gains made by the SNP in Scotland took the two-party share of seats to under 90% for the first time in the postwar period.

The final stage of the decline in two-party dominance in the elections up to the 2015 election has been marked by the increasingly complex party system. Three new parties, The Eurosceptic United Kingdom Independence Party "UKIP", the environmentalist Green Party and anti-immigration British National Party "BNP" managed to win seats in the European Parliament and London Assembly after proportional representation systems were instituted. They were then able to grow their profiles and media attention and spread into local government. Meanwhile the creation of the Scottish Parliament allowed the SNP to become a party of Government after winning the 2007 elections, although Plaid Cymru has yet to be able to capitalize in the same way from the Welsh Assembly. At the 2010 election UKIP, the BNP and the Greens increased their vote share to 3.2%, 2%, and 1% respectively, with the Green Party winning one seat. In addition to the growth in fourth-parties the Liberal Democrat votes share increased at each election between 2001 and 2010 although not managing to reach the peak achieved by the Alliance in 1983. Despite this the Liberal Democrats managed to increase their tally of seats to a peak of 62 in at the 2005 election and holding on to 57 in 2010. The consequence was another new record low in the two-party vote share at the 2010 election of just 66.7% and just over 85% of the seats.

The 2015 election saw a very small increase in the vote share of both major parties as the Liberal Democrat vote collapsed two-thirds, but the seats and votes total remained the second worst after 2010. The 2015 in structural terms was a shift from the third party to two of the three nationwide fourth parties from 2015, with UKIP winning over 12% and the Greens winning 4%,[46] although they only won two seats between them. In England, the two-party dominance of seats increased, winning 525 of 533 English seats.[47] The reason two-party seat share nationwide did increase was that 49 Lib Dem seats lost, was offset by 50 gains by the SNP who won a landslide 56 of the 59 seats in Scotland on the back of the close referendum result from September 2014 (Mitchell, 2015).



The second chart shows the numbers of candidates fielded by the Liberals, Nationalists and other selected fourth parties,[48] the Communists, the National Front and BNP,[49] the Greens,[50] UKIP and the Referendum Party,[51] which stood at only one election, 1997, getting 2.7% of the of the vote. The standout point is the big difference in the numbers of candidates over the period fielded by Britain's third party, the Liberals / Liberal Democrats, who, post 1983 stood essentially everywhere, but prior to that stood in a varying number of seats. The chart doesn't show that the 1955 tally of 110, along with 109 from the election previously was actually a low point, the party having fielded 265 candidates at the 1945 election. The Nationalists on the other hand were building up from a base of zero before the Second World War. The chart shows a flat line after the October 1974 election[52] as the SNP and Plaid stood in the full slate of seats in their nations. The drawback with looking at the number of candidates as an index of third and forth party strength is that it can sometimes obscure a humiliating failure. It might appear that the National Front was extremely strong in 1979 fielding over 300 candidates, but this disguises the fact that the number of votes per candidate was a very low 650; down from the 1,100 they had received on a lower number of candidates in October 1974. The Front's successor party, the BNP managed a much better average of just under 1,700 votes per candidate at its own peak in 2010. Finally, the second chart also shows that it was only at elections after 1997 when a fourth party stood in at least half the seats in Great Britain, and in 2010 and 2015 when two forth parties did.

4.2 Polarization of, and within the nations and regions of Great Britain

In the BBC's 1955 TV election coverage, David Butler explained that it was comparatively easy to predict the final election result by using just a few early results due to the remarkable uniformity of the way the nation votes in general elections. At the 1966 election, the BBC offered a prediction of a majority for Labour of 80 seats after only result was in, and the prediction was not far off the 96 seat majority they achieved. By the 2010 and 2015 elections, a measure of the extent to which this uniformity had broken down is demonstrated by the fact that none of the TV networks were willing to give a formal projection of the final results of the election based on the actual results, until over three quarters of constituencies had reported. The breakdown of traditional patterns, region-to-region, and even within counties or cities has made estimating results from early returns very difficult. This section aims to outline what has happened.

The visualizations regional polarization labelled 1 – 3, give a summary of the relative strength of the two parties in the 11 nations and regions of Great Britain from 1955 to 2015 and the change over the period. Some of these regions, especially London, were on different boundaries in 1955, but this thesis has treated them as constant throughout the period on their 1995 boundaries.[53] The regions are Scotland, Wales, [the] East [of England], East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire [& the Humber]. At each election, the relative performance of the two parties is compared in each region against the national average. For this exercise it is the difference between the Conservative minus the Labour vote in each region versus the Conservative versus Labour vote nationally. So if in region A the Conservatives were 5 points ahead of Labour, and nationally the Conservatives were 1 point of ahead of Labour, the region would be scored +4% more Conservative. The coloured dot for each election indicates which party won more votes in the region in absolute terms. In elections, such as 1959 when one of the parties had a big lead, the colours may appear to be on the *wrong side*, so for example in 1959 Scotland was 4% more Labour than the national average, but the Conservatives were 5% ahead nationally, and so won more votes than Labour in Scotland.

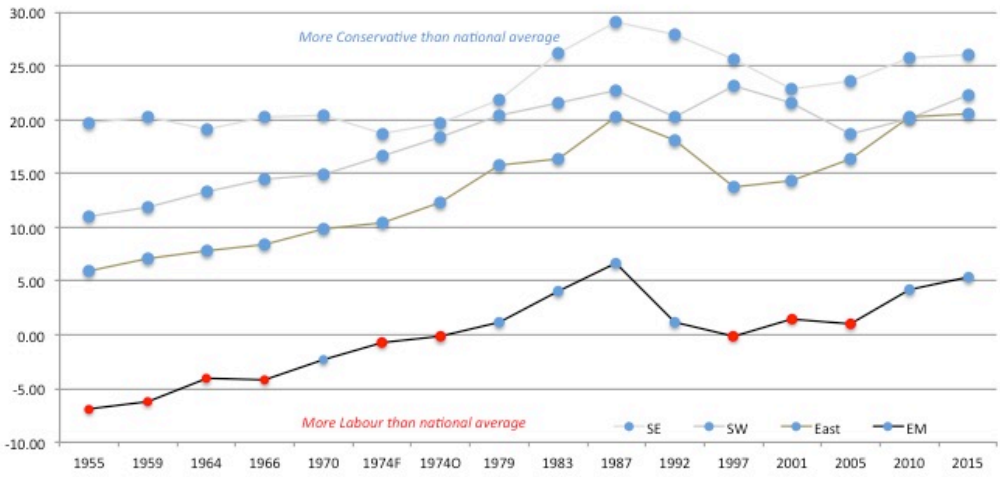
The first visualization shows four regions in the South and East of England trending towards the Conservatives. The South East region was the most Conservative region in 1955 and remained so at every election in the series. The change in the South East region was actually the smallest of the four with an increase over just over 7% in Conservative partisanship. The East and South West regions moved from 11 and 6% more Conservative than the national average to over 20% more Conservative. The Conservatives won more votes than Labour[54] in these regions in all elections, even including in their defeats of 1997 and 2001. The East Midlands region starts the period firmly in Labour territory with it being just under 7% more Labour than the national average, with the party still managing to win more votes than the Conservatives in 1959 when the Conservatives had a majority of 100. The region drifted slowly towards the Conservatives reaching the national average in the elections of 1974 and moving into Conservative territory in 1979. The region was 5% more

Conservative than the national mean in 2010, a move of 12% points since 1955. The trend for all four regions has been distorted somewhat by Labour's abysmal performance in the South and East at the 1987 election, which pushed the Conservative lead to its most extreme level in South East in the series. The trend was distorted in the other direction by the fact that the Labour vote increased much more in the South and East in 1997 than in the rest of the country assigned to Tony Blair's perceived moderation, but this was clearly reversed in 2010. Despite the Blair effect, all four regions were more Conservative in 1997 and 2001 than they had been in February 1974.

Regional Polarization 1955 – 2015 (1)

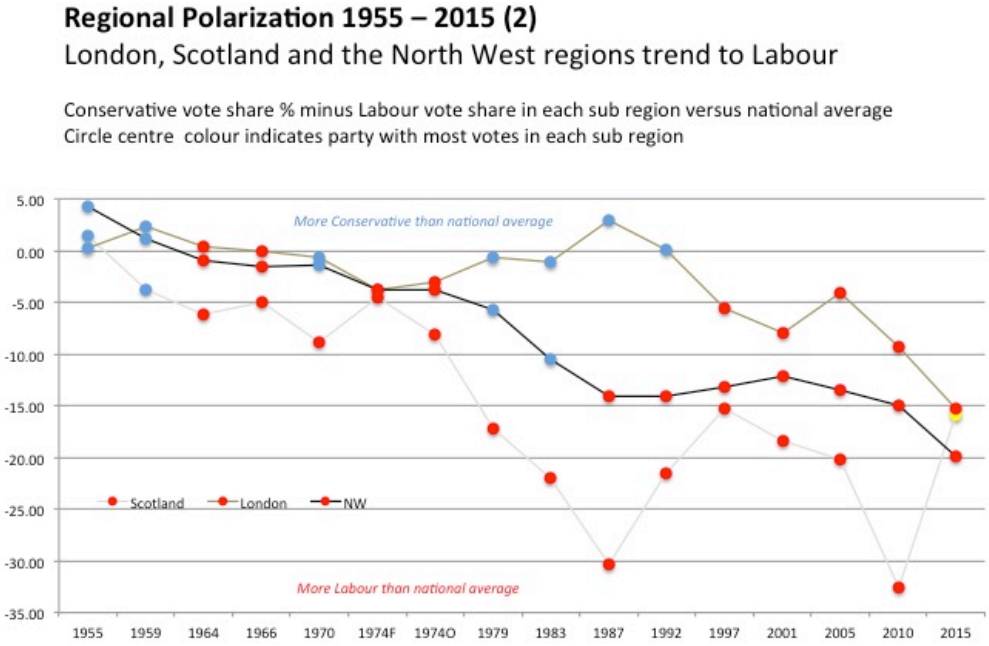
Four southern regions trend to Conservative

Conservative vote share % minus Labour vote share in each sub region versus national average
Circle centre colour indicates party with most votes in each sub region



The second chart shows three regions, Scotland, the North West and London moving towards Labour. It might surprise many contemporary political observers that all three regions were more Conservative than the national average in 1955 and that the North West only a percentage point less so than the South West. The picture for Scotland and the North West is almost an upside down version of the first picture with a steady move to Labour in the 1950s – 1970s with a particularly extreme polarization in 1987, a slight pull back in 1997 – 2001, and then a return to trend in 2010 with Scotland the North West both the most polarized towards Labour that they had been in the entire series. The 2015 collapse of Labour in Scotland reduced the gap somewhat, but since the victor was the SNP who won 56 of the 59 seats, the last icon has been labelled yellow. 2015 was, relatively speaking, a very good year for Labour in the North West with the relative advantage increasing from 15% to 20% points. London has been an outlier to the whole country in the sense that it remained very close to the national average in all elections apart from a 1987 blip prior to 1997, before moving very sharply to Labour. The Conservatives' big London victory of 1987 has been studied extensively and is usually blamed on alleged extremism by 'loony left' Labour councils who came to office after the 1986 local Government

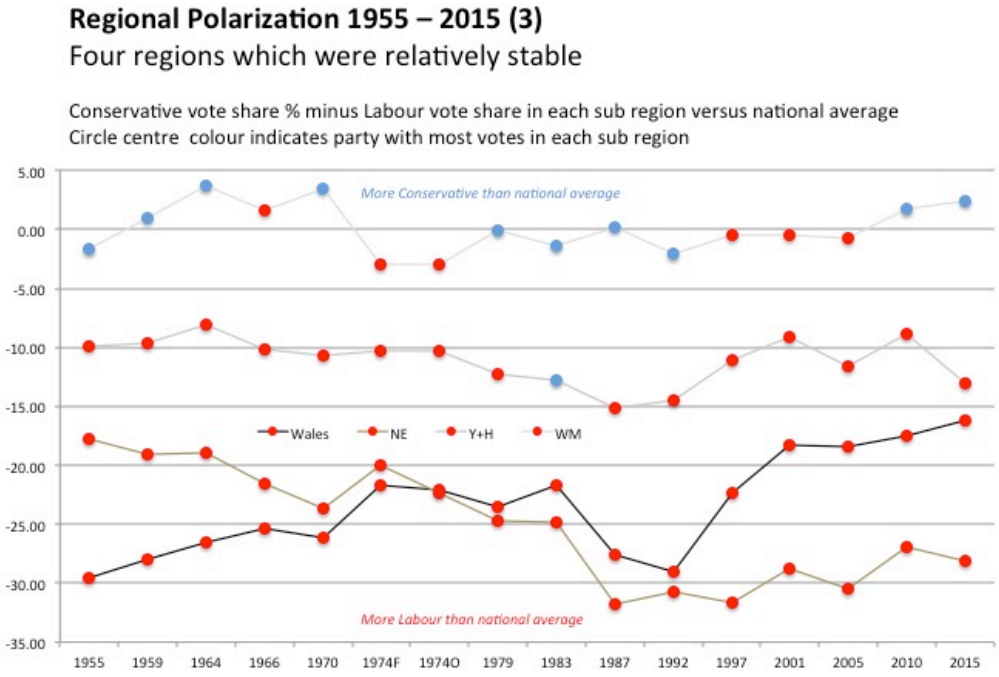
elections (Waller, 1991). Since 1997 London has moved from 5% more Labour than the national average to 15% more so at the 2015 election, the Conservatives losing four seats in London at that election to Labour whilst being net gainers in the rest of the country. Rapid demographic change in London may be responsible, such as the change in ethnic composition, London was approximately 21% non-white in 1991 and was 45% in 2015 (Baston, 2015).



The final chart shows three traditionally Labour regions, which have remained so, and the West Midlands, which has remained within 5% points of the national average for the entire period. Three of the four elections that the West Midlands deviated most from the national average 1970, and the 1974 elections may well have been due to Enoch Powell's whose speeches in 1970 are thought to have helped the Conservatives in the region, whilst his call for his supporters to vote Labour in the two 1974 elections are thought to explain the shift in the other direction. With the exception of 1964, the coloured dot for the party that won the most votes in the West Midlands shows the party that went on to form a Government after that election.

Yorkshire, Wales and the North East started as Labour regions and remained so, the Conservatives winning the former only once in Labour's disastrous year of 1983. Similar to Scotland and the North West, there was a particularly large distortion in 1987, Wales 1992 as well, as all three regions produced far more Labour results than usual. Since 1997, Wales has got slightly less Labour than it had been in the 1950s and 1960s, perhaps due to the delayed effects of the decline in the importance of coal and heavy industry, but it remains more than 15% more Labour than the national average and more Labour than Yorkshire. The case of Yorkshire is a contrast with the North West, both regions are associated with heavy industry and are dominated by large metropolitan areas

such as Leeds/Bradford, Sheffield/Rotherham and Liverpool, Manchester respectively, one has stayed roughly 10% more Labour than the national average whilst the other has shifted massively from 5% more Conservative to 20% more Labour.

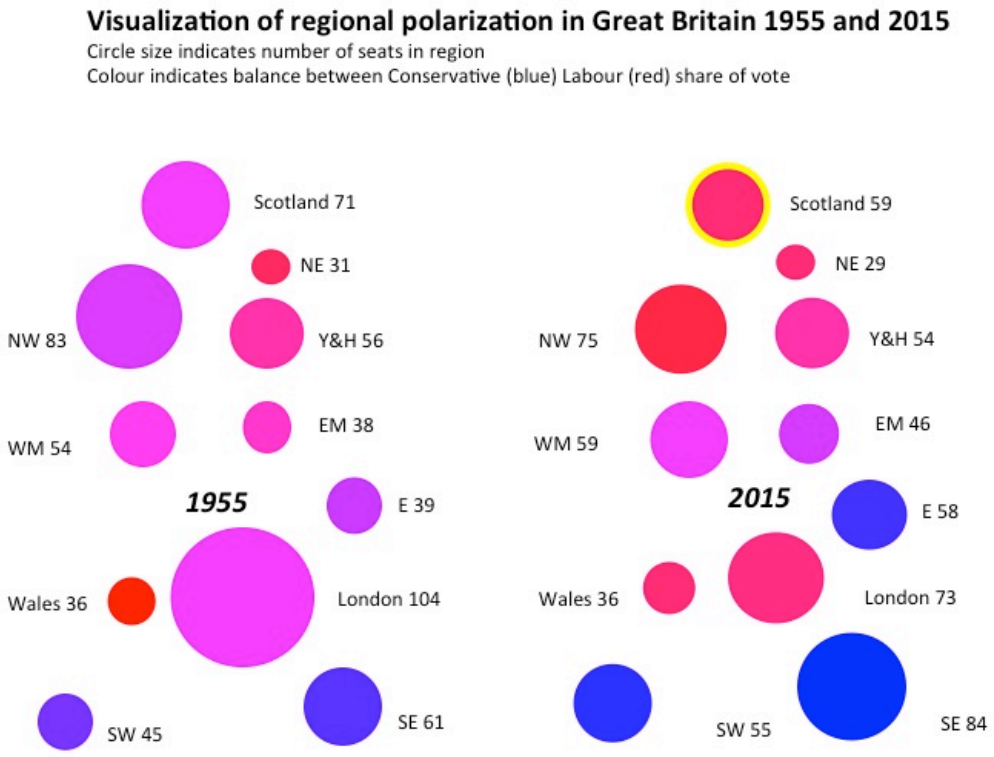


The extent of regional polarization can be estimated by finding the standard deviation of the Conservative share of the two party vote share from each region against the national mean. Given there are large differences in the size of the regions, each one has been weighted by the number of seats it was allocated at each election since 1955. The exercise has been done GB wide for all eleven regions and separately for the nine English regions and the result is visualized in the fourth chart on regional polarization. The result encapsulates the message from looking a regional breakdown individually; that there was a modest polarization trend up to the 1974 elections, which accelerated rapidly after 1979 with the most extreme polarization GB wide of all taking place in 1987. There was then a modest reversal up until 2001 as the Blair effect in the South of England took hold, but the regions remained very much more polarized than they had been even in 1997. After Blair left office, polarization has resumed with the English regions reaching their most extreme levels in 2015, the GB-wide trend only broken by the extreme shift in Scotland at the 2015 election.

Regional Polarization 1955 – 2015 (4)
Weighted standard deviation (%) of Conservative minus Labour vote share across all 11 GB regions and 9 within England only



The final cartogram on regions shows the relative partisanship in the regions at the 1955 and 2015 election by colour and also the number of seats the region had by the size of the coloured circles. As the images show, there has been a considerable change in relative importance of each of the regions, with London[55] dropping from the largest region to third behind the South East and North West in 2015. The three regions which have got more Labour; London, Scotland and the North West all have fewer seats than they did in 1955 whilst the regions getting more Conservative, especially the East and South East, have many more seats allocated to them. The difference is made up by the fact that the shifts in the regions that have moved to Labour have been more extreme than the other way around. The yellow shade around Scotland is to signify that although the nation was more Labour than Conservative in 2015, both parties trailed the SNP who won 56 of the 59 seats and just short of half the vote.

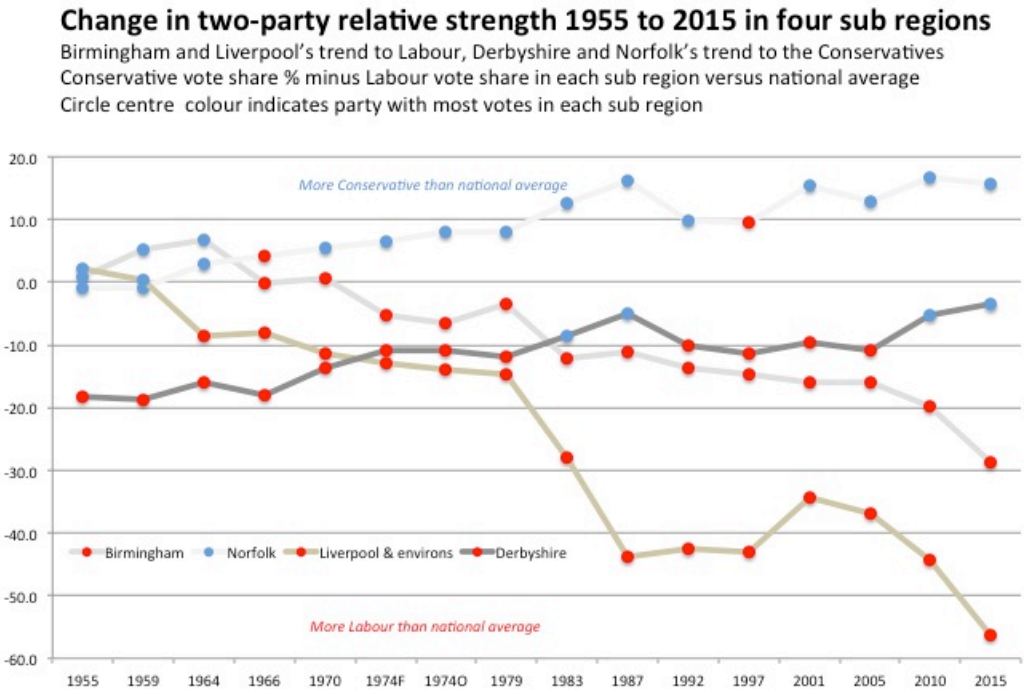


4.3 Changes in voting patterns within regions

As well as looking at region wide, it is worth looking at changing voting patterns in smaller areas such as counties. The next chart looks at the change in two party relative strength in four sub-regions; 'Liverpool and environs', [56] Birmingham,[57] Norfolk and Derbyshire. The first two industrial cities, one a largely rural county alongside the city of Norwich, and the other a mixed county of rural, mining and industry as well as the city of Derby.

The change in the partisan makeup of Liverpool and its suburbs since 1955 is by far the most extreme of any large city in England in the period. As the graph shows, in 1955, Liverpool was the most Conservative of the four sub-regions under review, being 2.2% more Conservative than the national average, whilst Norfolk was 0.9% more Labour than the national average. Of the nine seats allocated to the City of Liverpool itself the Conservatives won six of them in 1955 and 1959. As the chart shows, at every election from 1959 to 1987 other than a tiny blip in 1966, the Liverpool sub-region shifted relentlessly towards Labour relative to the national average. There was a particularly large shift in 1964 when the Conservatives lost four of their six seats in the City itself, and then in the 1980s elections when the area moved from being 15% more Labour than the national average, to well over 40% more. The 1987 election was not a short term distortion in that the area has not got anywhere close even to the 1983 level since, and by 2015 the situation for the Conservatives had deteriorated to the extent that the area is now over 55% more Labour than the national average.

The trend in Birmingham has been slower than in Liverpool but has gone in the same direction. The Conservatives did better in Birmingham than nationally in 1959 and 1964, and some have put that down, especially the latter, to the issue of immigration and race, on which the Labour party was seen as soft. The Conservatives gained the seat of Perry Barr in 1964 against the tide, and as David Butler lost no time in pointing out on the BBC TV's election coverage, that seat was next door to Smethwick,[58] where immigration and race played a big part the defeat of Labour's shadow foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon-Walker (Butler and King, 1965). As the chart shows, since the 1964 election, the Conservative situation in Birmingham deteriorated, and although they won more votes than Labour in 1983 and 1987, the relative performance was already over 10% worse than the national mean. After the 1997 election, the Conservatives were reduced to just the one seat of Sutton Coldfield and failed to win back in the once safe seat of Edgbaston in 2010 from Labour. The chart shows a little noticed coda, which was that the relative situation in Birmingham deteriorated even more rapidly than at any of the other elections in the series at the 2015 election with the City now almost 30% more Labour than the national average. Like the London and North West regions which have moved to Labour and seen the number of seats allocated decline, these two sub-regions have seen their seats decline, 15 in Liverpool and 14 in Birmingham to 11 and 10 respectively. The move in Liverpool has been a very much more extreme version of what has happened in its parent region the North West, however, the move in Birmingham is very much at odds with the West Midlands region as a whole which has not materially moved towards Labour at all.



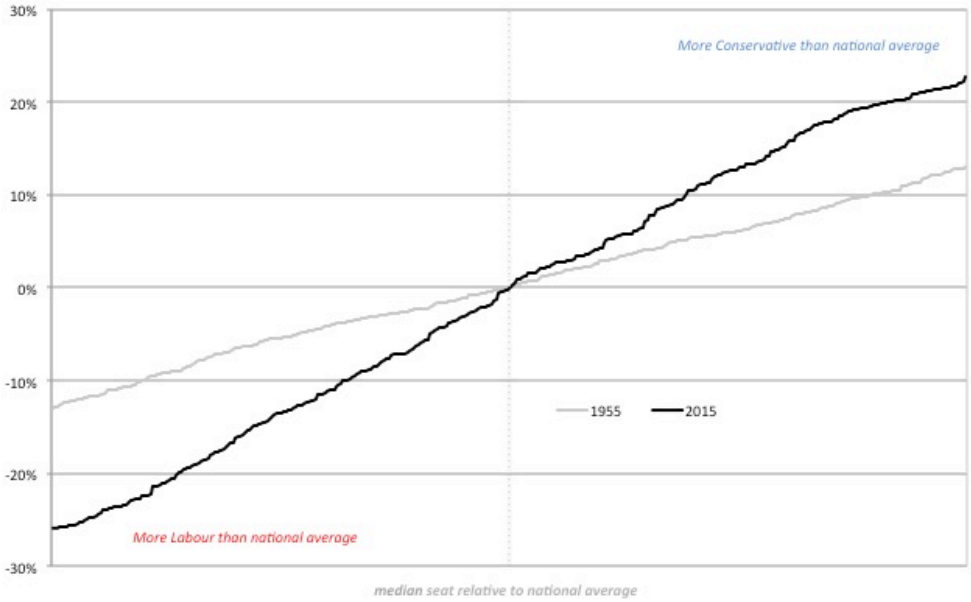
Norfolk and Derbyshire have both moved in the other direction from the two great cities. The Conservatives won more votes in Norfolk than Labour in 1955 but less so than the national average making Norfolk very slightly more Labour than average. Since then the county has shifted steadily towards the Conservatives with a peak at the polarized 1987 election of over 15% more Conservative than the national average, but then achieving such levels once again in the 2010 and 2015 elections. The move in Norfolk has been another accentuated version of the move in its parent region, Eastern. The county is still slightly less Conservative than the regional average, but has moved from a Labour outlier in a Conservative region, to a pretty typical area.

Derbyshire started the series with a pro-Labour bias of 19% much more than the 6.9% of its parent region the East Midlands, and in of all the full regions, only Wales was more Labour than this county in 1955. As the chart shows, Derbyshire has moved away being a firmly Labour area, to one that is very close to the national average with a pro-Labour bias of just 3% in 2015, and as per usual, with areas trending towards the Conservatives there was a blip up in 1987. Like Norfolk, Derbyshire has been a more accented version of its parent region the East Midlands, with a much greater move than the region wide. The decline in the mining industry in the period, as well as the opening up of better transport links allowing commuters from cities to move into the area, have been cited as good reasons for this shift (Baston, 2014).

Another measure of the political polarization within the regions that has been experienced since 1955 is the extent to which the marginality of seats between the two major parties has declined. The final chart in this section looks at the 401 seats, [200 each side], closest to the national average of the Conservative share of the two party vote. The x-axis then ranks them by the relative Conservative share of the two party vote with the most Labour on the left and most Conservative on the right and whilst the y-axis measures the extent to which each seat deviates from the national average in the two party vote. The picture shows that the slope in 2015 is very much steeper than in 1955. At the 1955 election, the 200th seat more Labour than the national average was only just over 12% more Labour than the that national average. In 2015, this had more than doubled with 200th seat being more than 25% more Labour than the national average. Not only that, but whilst the 1955 slope is roughly straight and symmetrical, there is a skew in the 2015 chart with the 200th Labour seat much more relatively Labour than the 200th most Conservative seat is relatively Conservative.

Polarization in British General Elections 1955 – 2015 (individual seats)

Conservative % of two party vote in constituency minus % national mean two party vote, ranked by constituency. Chart shows mid ranked 400 constituencies at each election



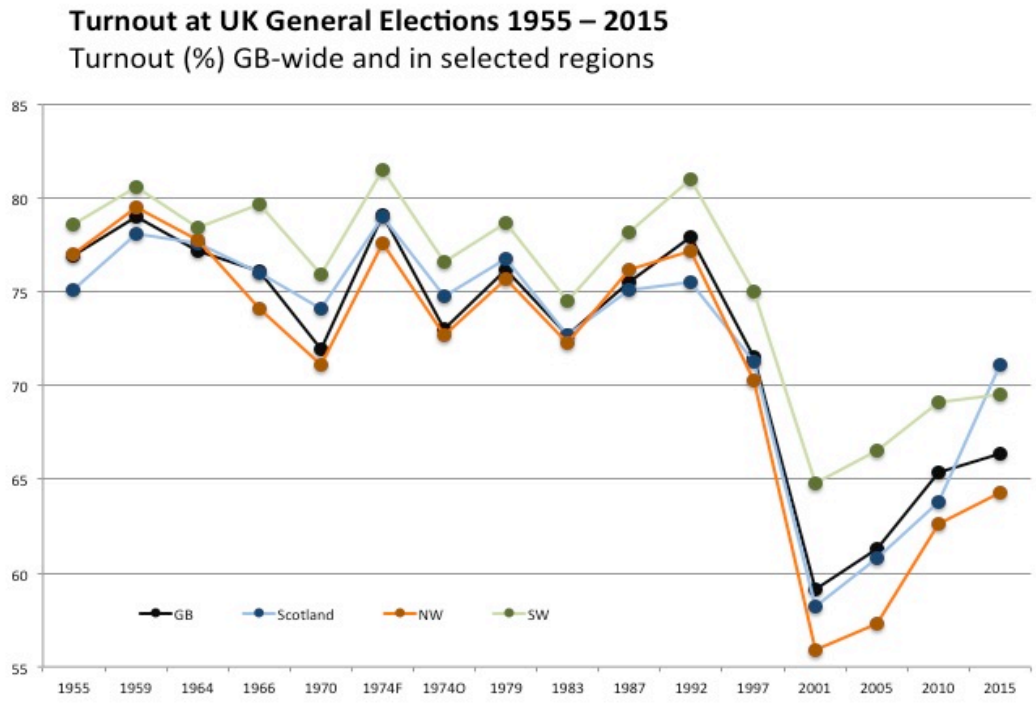
4.4 Decline in, and increase in variation in turnout

The chart below shows the history of turnout in Great Britain, Scotland, the North West of England and the South West of England. The purpose of this is to show that turnout has declined since the 1950s and that the variation in turnout across the regions has increased. The South West region has been selected as it has traditionally seen the highest turnouts in England, whilst the North West has been a region that has traditionally had a very typical turnout to one amongst the lowest in England and Scotland with its more complex party system something of a law unto itself. Looking at the chart without any analysis whatsoever would might lead one to come to the conclusion that the turnout Great Britain wide was completely stable from 72 to 78% from 1955 to 1992, before falling in 1997 and collapsing to a low under 60% in 2001, with a modest recovery after at elections afterwards. The chart on its own might suggest that something happened between 1992 and 2001 to make voting very much less popular, and that the period after 2001 had not led to a recovery.

The more likely answer is that the voter turnout in Great Britain, as has been typical in most Western democratic nations has fallen due to other changes in society (van der Eijk and Franklin, 2009). The trend was perhaps distorted by the fact that the 1992 election was an extremely close and uncertain election with opinion polls indicating a hung Parliament for most of the campaign, whereas there was absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the Labour Party would win the 1997, 2001 and very little doubt in 2005 which appears to have distorted the turnout lower. The 1997 election may have seen a higher turnout than 2001, because there was a desire for change after a long-period of Conservative Government in 1997, whereas 2001 was a no-change election (Curtice and Steed, 2001). The elections of 2010 and 2015 were seen at the were seen as far less certain with the polls correctly predicting a hung outcome in 2010, and incorrectly predicting a hung Parliament in 2015 and this could well explain in the partial recovery in turnout (Denver, 2010, Denver, 2015). There may therefore have been a disguised secular decline in turnout over a 30-year period with a distortion due to the unusual situations in 1992, 2001, and 2010-5.

The chart below also illustrates the second element, that there is now a greater variation amongst the nations and regions of Great Britain. The South West region of England has been noted as a higher turnout region and has been above the national average at every election since 1955. However, the gap between the South West and the national average has widened from around 1.5 to 2%-points in the 1950s to 3-5% since 2001. The North West region saw slightly higher than average turnout at the first three elections in the series, albeit within 1%, but has since shifted to a low-turnout region since then. The North West region saw turnouts 2 to 3.5% lower than the national average in the 2001 to 2015 period. Scotland has seen turnout on both sides of the national average often due to the local reasons. Turnout was higher than the national average in 1970 in the wake of the Kilbrandon report on devolution (Steed, 1971), and October 1974 when there was excitement about the Scottish National Party's ability to make gains from the two major parties which they did (Steed, 1975). Turnout was at least 1% lower than the national average in the 1955, 1992 and 2010 for

reasons less certain. The jump in turnout in 2015 to over 71%, which made it, the highest turnout region of Great Britain was due to the aftermath of the independence referendum in Sept 2014 (Denver, 2015) (Mitchell, 2015).



4.5 Partisan dealignment

It is an accepted fact, in Western Europe and North America that there was a major decline in voter partisanship from the immediate post war period to the millennium with voters moving away traditional class,[59] occupational, or in some cases sectarian cues[60] (van der Eijk and Franklin, 2009). The literature review section 3.3 <above> discussed the reasons for this change in more detail, and the purpose of this section is to look at data to assess how things have changed in the UK. One issue with getting an accurate measure of this is the fact that there is limited data using a consistent set of criteria over the full period.

The data from this section has been derived from the British Election Survey, which started in 1964 and used the same set of questions at 10 of the 14 elections in the series, all except 1959, 1997 and 2005 and 2010. These are derived partisan identification, from positive answers to (a) and (b) below, and (ii) the strength of the partisan identification from the third question.

(a) Generally speaking do you think of yourself as [PARTY]?
(b) Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others [PARTY]?

(c) Strength of Partisan Identification [very strong, somewhat strong, not very strong]

Table 4.1 and the visualization show in quantitative terms the decline in partisanship amongst the British electorate since 1964. The first set of rows in Table 4.1 is the proportion of all respondents who feel an affinity to one of the parties and of those who do, the proportion feeling it strongly, somewhat strongly, or not very strongly. In 1964 almost 95% of those questioned by the BES felt at least some affinity to one of the extant political parties, but by 2001 this had fallen to just under 87%. Meanwhile, the proportion feeling strong affinity had dropped from 44 to 13.4%, and those feeling not very strong affinity had tripled from 10.5 to 31.9%. The proportion expressing moderate support was steady at around 40%. One can see clearly from this that there has been a shift away from strong partisanship and towards either weak or non-partisanship.

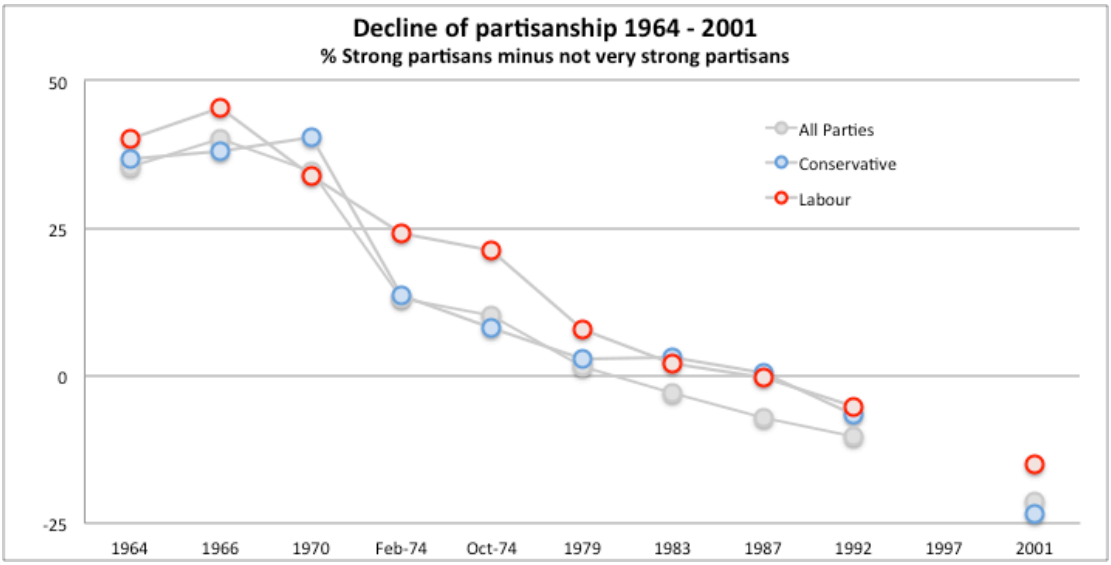
The next two sets of rows show the strengths of partisanship within those voters expressing an affinity to either the Conservatives or Labour. The patterns are very close to identical with just under half of the supporters expressing strong affinity in 1964, falling to around a quarter in 1979 and around 15% in 2001. Likewise the proportion of weak supporters tripled from 1964 to 2001.

The visualisation displays the balance between strong and weak partisans for each election over the period amongst all parties and the two major parties individually. The results show an almost relentless decline in the strength of partisan at each election with no obvious correlation with the relative support of the two parties at given elections. Whilst the Conservatives increased their vote share from 36 to 44% from 1974 to 1979 the strength of partisanship still continued to fall, likewise, Labour's vote share recovered from 27 to 36% from 1983 to 1992 with no break in the trend.

Table 4.1 Partisan dealignment in the UK 1964 -2001

% Voters in the British Election Study describing themselves as supporting a party/no party and strength of support

	1964	1966	1970	Feb-74	Oct-74	1979	1983	1987	1992	2001
All Parties										
Very strong support	44.1	45.9	43.3	30.6	26.9	22.1	22.2	19.8	18.1	13.4
Fairly strong support	40.1	39.0	37.3	44.1	47.6	47.1	41.9	42.8	44.5	41.6
Not very strong	10.5	8.5	11.5	18.3	17.6	20.7	24.8	26.1	27.5	31.9
no party	5.2	6.6	7.9	6.9	7.8	10.2	11.0	11.3	9.9	13.2
Conservative supporters										
Very strong support	49.1	50.0	50.7	32.1	27.4	24.2	26.6	24.0	20.7	12.9
Fairly strong support	38.6	38.1	38.9	49.4	53.4	54.4	50.0	52.5	51.8	50.7
Not very strong support	12.4	11.9	10.4	18.6	19.2	21.4	23.4	23.6	27.4	36.4
Labour supporters										
Very strong support	49.2	52.0	46.9	40.3	36.4	28.4	29.7	27.1	23.9	17.9
Fairly strong support	41.8	41.5	39.9	43.4	48.2	51.2	42.6	45.5	47.0	49.3
Not very strong support	9.0	6.5	13.1	16.2	15.3	20.5	27.7	27.4	29.1	32.8


Decline of partisanship 1964 - 2001
% Strong partisans minus not very strong partisans
50
25
0
-25
1964
1966
1970
Feb-74
Oct-74
1979
1983
1987
1992
1997
2001
All Parties
Conservative
Labour

4.6 Changes in party policy polarization

Unlike partisan dealignment, changes in polarization of party platforms have not been steady and have moved in both directions. By polarization one means the differences in party policies, typically on a left-right or other appropriate axis. The more polarized, the greater the difference in political positioning between the major parties. The point of the section is to outline what the parties offered to the electorate by way of manifesto commitments, which is different from what they might have delivered or failed to deliver in office. The significance of this former point is that what the thesis is interested in is about the choice that voters were being offered between the parties at each election. There was the so-called post-war or Butskellism[61] consensus of the 1950s and 1960s in which the party's policies converged, followed by a polarization in the 1970s and 1980s, and then a third period of consensus from the mid 1990s, which will be explained in the next section.[62]

The post-war consensus, sometimes described as Butskellism, came about after the Conservative Party came to accept most of Labour's social welfare reforms of the 1940s and declined to reverse them in its three terms in office from 1951-64 period. The leaderships of the parties remained committed to a mixed economy, including state planning and Keynesian economics as well as the UK's independent nuclear deterrent, opposition to the Soviet Union and membership of NATO. Relative economic decline[63] and industrial strife led to both parties to experiment. Edward Heath committed the Conservative Party to liberalising reforms ahead of the 1970 election and although many of these were curtailed in the 1972-3 period, they were arguably a dry run for the reforming agenda of Margaret Thatcher, who moved further to the right with policies such as privatization and more stringent control of trade unions and inflation. Labour's political platform moved to the left under pressure from activists, which resulted in a very left wing offering to the country in the first 1974 election, which included policies such as wealth taxes and price controls (Labour, 1974). Another very left-wing manifesto was produced ahead of the 1983 election when Labour's leader Michael Foot proposed unilateral nuclear disarmament as well as a series of left-wing economic policies to reverse Mrs Thatcher's reforms (Jameson, 1995). Labour's fourth successive defeat in 1992 and the election of the economic centrist Tony Blair led to a realignment with Labour accepting most of the Thatcher reforms of the 1980s, adopting neo-liberal economic policies and categorically rejecting unilateral nuclear disarmament. Whilst the Conservatives got their way on economic reforms, the party under David Cameron post 2005 came to accept many of Labour's social reforms such as on LGBT rights, thus creating a new consensus on economic and social policies.

In order to link this to the quantitative analysis of the project, some form of numerical analysis of the data necessary. *The Manifesto Project*[64] has done just this, looking at over 1000 political parties in 50 countries at elections since 1945. This project has opted to use their data as a starting point to capture changes in polarization at election time with data for the Conservatives and Labour for the elections from 1959 – 2010 to provide a score of polarization between the two

parties. The dataset has 57 categories of data, some of which are not relevant to the UK or from which it wouldn't be possible to provide a left-right split from a UK perspective. This project uses 20 of the 57 and scores them positive for right wing traits and negatively for a left wing trait using the relative scores for each category provided by the manifesto project. The decision as to whether to score them as left or right for the purpose of this project is taken by this author. For the purpose of this project, socially liberal categories, e.g. favouring internationalism, secularism and multiculturalism are scored as left and socially conservative such as nationalism, respect for traditional values and opposition to immigration as right.

The results of this can be seen from the visualization and table below which demonstrate graphically what the outline paragraph above explained. The Conservatives and Labour parties had close, but not identical platforms from 1955 – 1970, a wide divergence from 1974 – 1992 and then another era of convergence in the 1997 – 2010 period. Labour's 2001 and 2010 manifestos were a hair's breadth to the right of the Conservatives under this construction of an index.[65] There is a serious potential limitation in the data since that although it might provide at least some measure of an objective index of actual polarization, it is not necessarily the same as was perceived by the electorate themselves. However, in the absence of consistent data of how the electorate perceived the parties' platform on a left-right basis, this is perhaps the best possible alternative.[66]

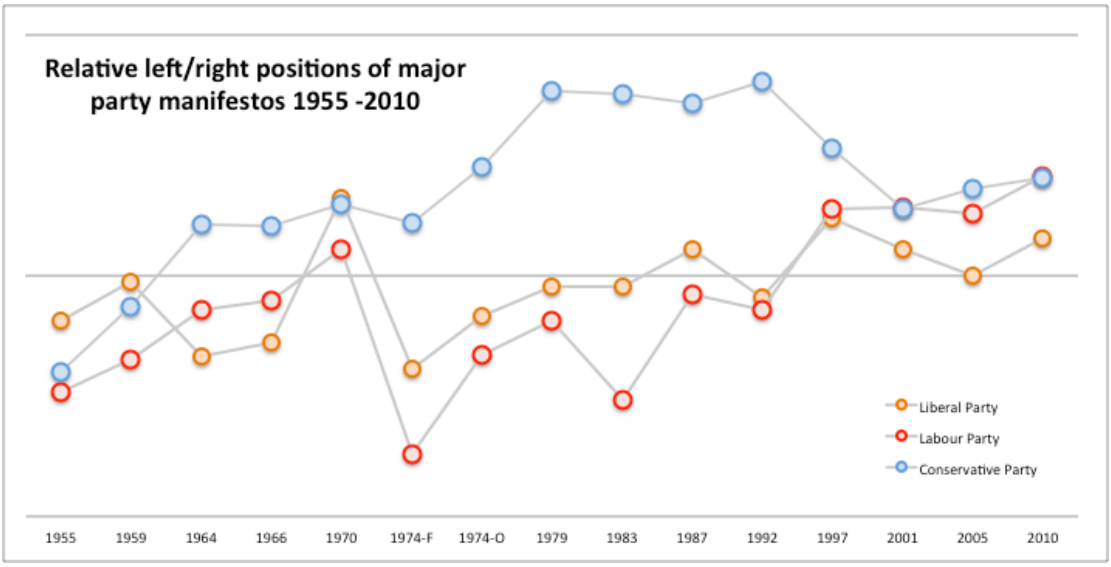


Table 4.6 Synthetic Left-Right index of manfiestos 1955 - 2010

	Conservatives	Labour Party	Liberal Party	Polarization Difference Conservative / Labour
1955	-8.07	-9.63	-3.80	1.56
1959	-2.57	-7.03	-0.55	4.45
1964	4.21	-2.80	-6.70	7.01
1966	4.14	-2.08	-5.62	6.22
1970	5.88	2.11	6.35	3.77
1974-F	4.35	-14.82	-7.76	19.17
1974-O	9.03	-6.56	-3.38	15.59
1979	15.25	-3.83	-0.87	19.08
1983	15.06	-10.34	-0.94	25.40
1987	14.29	-1.63	2.21	15.92
1992	16.05	-2.84	-1.86	18.89
1997	10.56	5.57	4.72	4.99
2001	5.55	5.61	2.14	0.06
2005	7.25	5.14	-0.03	2.11
2010	8.07	8.20	3.13	0.13

4.7 Implications for the quantitative work in the thesis.

The findings of this brief overview demonstrate the extent of the changes in voting behaviour since the 1950s. Whilst the two-party system has been significantly weakened by the changes over the full period, it certainly has not been broken, and it remains inconceivable that any party other than one of the big two could form a Government on its own. The consequences of this for the thesis are that the methodology for the measurement of incumbency needs to take account of these changes and one, which is robust for the entire period. For example, using a simple calculation using Butler Swing might work for the 1955 election with so few other candidates, but not so well for the multi-party period later in the series.[67]

The purpose of sections 4.1 – 4.4 are to give a detailed case for why robust methodology and significant adjustments are going to be needed to measure incumbency with a minimum of bias. The US models that are being adapted for use in the UK's post war two-and-a-half party system and later the developing multi party system require careful adaptation. As an article by Gelman & King discussed in section 5.3 <below> shows, there are some flaws in using the slurge or their own model in a multi party system. The adjustments and controls made to the models in section five are derived with the work from this section in mind.

Changes in the structure of the party system in section 4.1 are addressed by controls for Liberal and Nationalist intervention outlined in section 5.6. The effects of new party interventions were small enough at the 2010 election that it was possible to be controlled for by adding in specific, limited exclusions. The second consequence is the need a separate look at Scotland and Wales. There was a four-party system in these two nations, at least from 1970, and both Nationalist Parties managed to gain permanent footholds in the House of Commons from October 1974.

The regional and demographic shifts in voting and turnout outlined in 4.2-4.4 also show the need for appropriate controls to take account of this. For example, since we know that there was a significant trend in the North West of England from Conservative to Labour, it might well appear by looking at a constituency's individual result that an MP was doing well or badly, but the reason for this could well be explained by this regional shift. Looking at the sub-regions also shows that a more precise control might be needed. There was very little regional trend in the West Midlands in 2015 relative to the rest of the country, but in the City of Birmingham itself, something very different indeed was going on, with all the seats moving towards Labour. Therefore, any apparent the first time bounce achieved by new Labour MP elected for the first time 2010 could be exaggerated, or a retirement penalty obscured. Controls for region and even county can be applied, as well as turnout data. Section 5.6 <below> explains how these issues are to be tackled.

Whilst the first four sections of this chapter highlight pitfalls that need to be avoided, section 4.5 and 4.6 presents two opportunities that might be able to shed some light as to why there has been a change in incumbency advantage. As section 3.3 <above> shows, one of the theories as to why incumbency advantage has increased in the US and UK so much is that voters are less tribal in their support for of the parties and thus are now willing to lend their vote to the candidate of another party who they feel is doing a good job as their member. As the Cain study on 1979 election data showed, every single strong Conservative partisan in their survey voted against an incumbent Labour MP, but since the proportion of voters describing themselves as 'strong partisans' halved between 1979 and 2010, the pool of such people who perhaps wouldn't consider voting for an incumbent of another party has shrunk. This gives an opportunity to test if there is a correlation between this decline in partisan alignment and change in the value of incumbency.

The change in polarization over the period may also present another opportunity to detect if there is any other macro change that is a top down change in the value of incumbency. As section 3.3 suggests, the hypothesis would be that in a scenario where the parties have very similar platforms, there is less to inhibit voters who might otherwise vote for another party plumping for their incumbent MP. The fact that the final 1997 – 2010 period of the lowest polarization amongst the party manifestos coincides with the highest observed values of incumbency suggests that there may well be something in this, and that work can be done to assess the importance of this factor. This is of additional importance since, during the write-up phase of the project, the parties under Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn have considerably moved apart in ideological terms. If incumbency advantage is indeed inversely related to the polarization of the party platform, then one might expect to see the value of incumbency advantage fall in future elections.

Chapter 4 Appendix - Categories taken from *The Manifesto Project*.

The text description is the verbatim description of the category from the authors of the manifesto project. The decision as to whether to firstly include it and secondly score it left or right for the purposes of this projection is taken by this author.

Categories taken as being left-wing indicators for the purpose of the project

per105 Military: Negative

Negative references to the military or use of military power to solve conflicts. References to the 'evils of war'. May include references to:

- Decreasing military expenditures;
- Disarmament;
- Reduced or abolished conscription.

per107 Internationalism: Positive

Need for international co-operation, including co-operation with specific countries other than those coded in 101. May also include references to the:

- Need for aid to developing countries;
- Need for world planning of resources;
- Support for global governance;
- Need for international courts;
- Support for UN or other international organisations.

per403 Market Regulation

Support for policies designed to create a fair and open economic market. May include:

- Calls for increased consumer protection;
- Increasing economic competition by preventing monopolies and
- Other actions disrupting the functioning of the market;
- Defence of small businesses against disruptive powers of big businesses;
- Social market economy.

per404 Economic Planning

Favourable mentions of long-standing economic planning by the government. May be:

- Policy plans, strategies, policy patterns etc.;
- Of a consultative or indicative nature.

per405 Corporatism/Mixed Economy

Favourable mentions of cooperation of government, employers, and trade unions simultaneously. The collaboration of employers and employee organisations in overall economic planning supervised by the state.

per409 Keynesian Demand Management

Favourable mentions of demand side oriented economic policies (assistance to consumers rather than businesses). Particularly includes increase private demand through

- Increasing public demand;
- Increasing social expenditures.

May also include:

- Stabilisation in the face of depression;
- Government stimulus plans in the face of economic crises.

per412 Controlled Economy

Support for direct government control of economy. May include, for instance:

- Control over prices;
- Introduction of minimum wages.

per413 Nationalisation

Favourable mentions of government ownership of industries, either partial or complete; calls for keeping nationalised industries in state hand or nationalising currently private industries. May also include favourable mentions of government ownership of land.

per602 National Way of Life: Negative

Unfavourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation and history. May include:

- Opposition to patriotism;
- Opposition to nationalism;
- Opposition to the existing national state, national pride, and national ideas.

per604 Traditional Morality: Negative

Opposition to traditional and/or religious moral values. May include:

- Support for divorce, abortion etc.;
- General support for modern family composition;
- Calls for the separation of church and state.

per607 Multiculturalism: Positive

Favourable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies. May include the preservation of autonomy of religious, linguistic heritages within the country including special educational provisions.

Categories taken as being right-wing indicators for the purpose of the project

per104 Military: Positive

The importance of external security and defence. May include statements concerning:

- The need to maintain or increase military expenditure;
- The need to secure adequate manpower in the military;
- The need to modernise armed forces and improve military strength;
- The need for rearmament and self-defence;
- The need to keep military treaty obligations.

per109 Internationalism: Negative

Negative references to international co-operation. Favourable mentions of national independence and sovereignty with regard to the manifesto country's foreign policy, isolation and/or unilateralism as opposed to internationalism.

per401 Free Market Economy

Favourable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model. May include favourable references to:

- Laissez-faire economy;
- Superiority of individual enterprise over state and control systems
- Private property rights;
- Personal enterprise and initiative;
- Need for unhampered individual enterprises.

per402 Incentives: Positive

Favourable mentions of supply side oriented economic policies (assistance to businesses rather than consumers). May include:

- Financial and other incentives such as subsidies, tax breaks etc.;
- Wage and tax policies to induce enterprise;
- Encouragement to start enterprises.

per414 Economic Orthodoxy

Need for economically healthy government policy making. May include calls for:

- Reduction of budget deficits;
- Retrenchment in crisis;
- Thrift and savings in the face of economic hardship;
- Support for traditional economic institutions such as stock market and banking system;
- Support for strong currency.

per601 National Way of Life: Positive

Favourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals. May include:

- Support for established national ideas;
- General appeals to pride of citizenship;
- Appeals to patriotism;
- Appeals to nationalism;
- Suspension of some freedoms in order to protect the state against subversion.

per603 Traditional Morality: Positive

Favourable mentions of traditional and/or religious moral values. May include:

- Prohibition, censorship and suppression of immorality and unseemly behaviour;
- Maintenance and stability of the traditional family as a value;
- Support for the role of religious institutions in state and society.

per605 Law and Order: Positive

Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. Only refers to the enforcement of the status quo of the manifesto country's law code. May include:

- Increasing support and resources for the police;
- Tougher attitudes in courts;
- Importance of internal security.

per608 Multiculturalism: Negative

The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration. Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society.

Data citation:

Volkens, Andrea / Lehmann, Pola / Matthieß, Theres / Merz, Nicolas / Regel, Sven / Weßels, Bernhard (2017): The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR). Version 2017b. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB). https://doi.org/10.25522/manifesto.mpds.2017b

Chapter 5 Hypotheses, methodology and data

5.1 Hypothesis and scope

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the existence of MPs' incumbency advantage, is it *significant*, *how much is it worth* and *how much has it changed*. The first of these can be defined very simply, do incumbent MPs perform statistically significantly better than non-incumbent MPs at elections in terms of votes. If a variable for incumbency is added into a model for estimating election results is this variable significant or insignificant. The second question can be answered in two ways, firstly how much is incumbency worth in votes, do incumbent MPs do x% better than non incumbent MPs, but secondly, is it possible to estimate in terms of outcomes of individual seats if incumbency or incumbency related factors made a difference. The first and second questions require an answer as to the methods needed to measure incumbency. The third question requires an answer as to the scope and extent of the project, how far back can one sensibly go before encountering obstacles.

Scope

Despite hundreds of years of elections and election data, the UK's electoral system has only been in its present form, all single member districts with roughly the same sized electorates, and everyone entitled to a vote having no more than one vote per election, since the election of 1950. Prior to this election, which was the first held under the1948 Representation of the People Act, there were a series[68] of multi member constituencies were voters were given the same number of votes as there were members to be elected.[69] There were also a total 12 MPs elected by graduates of various universities or groups of universities giving a minority of citizens plural voting. Prior to 1950, although some attempt had been made to avoid extreme differences in constituency electorate size, there was no quota and historical anomalies such as the City of London having still two MPs with fewer than four thousand electors were a plenty. The Boundary Commission for England was required to keep constituencies within 25% of a national average and periodic reviews were established (Rossiter et al., 1999).

Although 1950 may appear to be a good starting point, the boundaries created ahead of this election were only used twice in 1950 and 1951 before new boundaries were created in 1955. The methodology for measuring incumbency will be comparing the results of an election against those of the preceding election, thus given there no data exists as to what the 1945 election would have looked like on the "1950 boundaries", this would mean the 1951 election would be on its own. Therefore the base year for the project has been selected as 1955, with the first estimates made for the election of 1959 when the 1955 boundaries were used for a second time. Five elections were fought on the 1955 boundaries, 1955,1959,1964, 966 and 1970, which gives a clear run.

Later boundary changes, ahead of the 1974, 1983, 1997 and 2010 elections[70] are less of a problem, since the Press Association and BBC have worked with

academics to create what they initially described as a 'pools panel' of notional results of what the results of election t-1 would have been on the new boundaries after a change. Therefore, work can still be done on the first 1974 election by adopting the estimates for the 1970 results on the new boundaries as the results of election t-1. Therefore, there are fourteen pairs of elections for the project to assess from 1955-59 to 2005-2010.

For the smaller parties there is an issue about the very small number of relevant cases. Section 5.5 <below> explains the details of the reasoning behind the restrictions for the Liberals and Nationalists, which is to restrict own party incumbency data for the Liberals from 1983 to 2010 and to estimate nationalist incumbency in multi election regressions only.

5.2 Data collection

A master election database for the results of the 14 general elections under scrutiny as well as the base year 1955 has been put together over the course of the project. The database contains a line for each constituency at each election with vote shares of each party at election t and election t-1. Additionally, fields have been added with the party that won the seat at the election t-1, whether or not the incumbent MP was restanding, if there was an incumbent MP retiring and restanding for the first time, whether there were repeat candidates from opposition parties, by elections or other special circumstances. Additional information such as region and county of the constituency has also been added.

Election voting data for 1955 – 1992 comes from Danny Dorling's dataset deposited at the UK Data Archive, and the numbers for 1997 – 2010 come from Pippa Norris's Election Databases. For elections after boundary changes (that is, 1983, 1997, 2010), the votes at election t are run against the notional estimates compiled for the new boundaries for election t-1. Lists of estimated notional results for the new boundaries and lists, confirming successor seats were compiled by the BBC and ITV for the 1983 election, and for the Press Association ahead of the 1997 and 2010 elections, and the Scottish constituencies ahead of 2005 (Rallings et al., 1995, Rallings et al., 2007, Denver et al., 2004). For the estimated notionals of 1970 results on 1974 boundaries which was provided by John Curtice and originates from the first 1974 *Nuffield Study* (Steed, 1974).

Data on incumbency and repeat candidacy[71] for the 1997 – 2010 elections came from Pippa Norris's datasets. For previous elections, each name had to be entered into the system manually For the 1983 – 1992 elections, names were checked against various issues of the *Almanac of British Politics* and, crosschecked against David Boothroyd's *United Kingdom Election Results* online database. For the 1955 – 1979 data, and the repeat candidate data, the work was done later in the project, and the source for the candidate and incumbent names came from Richard Kimber's extensive *politicsresources.net* data. Later in the project the reliability of data in *Wikipedia* was sufficiently accurate to use as an additional check for queries.

When the names of the candidates and incumbents for each election had been entered, binary and trichotomous variables were entered into the database, for example, in a seat where a Conservative MP restands for election the Conservative incumbent "CONINC" variable would be coded one, where this was not the case, it would be coded 0. If the constituency is in England, "ENG" would be set to 1 if not zero etc.

5.3 Methodology

One of the key aims of the project from the start has been to systematically and consistently chart the evolution of incumbency over an extended period. As discussed in the literature review there have been a number of analyses for individual elections since the 1950s, most frequently by the Nuffield Studies, but there is a gap in the literature. The purpose of the project is to investigate incumbency rather than to create new models or methods of measuring it. Therefore the project seeks to build on the existing methodology used from US or other literature. The two most well known and widely used in US literature are 'slurge' and the Gelman King Index. This section will explain why they have been selected for use in this project and how they have been adapted for the UK model.

Slurge

The purpose of the slurge model is to capture the value of incumbency, if any, by observing the first term surge incumbent legislators receive in their first re-election attempt and the retirement penalty their party receives in seats when a legislator of their party does not restand and a new candidate stands instead. The simplest way this could be done is to use simple means, what is the average change in the vote in seats in which party A held at election t-1, where there is a candidate restanding, where this a first term candidate restanding for the first time, or where the incumbent is standing down. This is indeed what a number of Nuffield studies such as 2010 have sought to do, or in some cases have looked at in terms of the swing between the Conservatives and Labour, or such as 1959, just one side of it, e.g. retirements only.

This project has opted to use regression analysis, such that additional controls and variables can be added, and the statistical significance of the results can be assessed. The models will use ordinary least square "OLS" regressions with the dependent variable being the change in party P's vote share in each constituency from election t-1 to election t. Whilst it would also have been possible to use the swing from party Pi to Pii, other studies in multi party systems and indeed the Nuffield Studies since the 1980s had taken the variation in the own party vote as the basis of the tests.[72]

The methodology for the slurge evolved slighted as thesis progressed. The starting point was the following:

$$\Delta(VP_{it}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 VP_{t-1i} + \beta_{2j} P_{ij} SEAT_{t-1} - \beta_{3j} P_{ij} RET_t + \beta_{4j} P_{ij} FIRST_t + \beta_5 \Delta TO_t + \beta_6 TO_{t-1} + \epsilon$$

Where, the party Pi's change in share of the vote in each constituency (V) at election t is run against; $\beta_1 V$ their share of the vote at the previous election (t-1); β_{2j} a dummy variable for each party Pij that was winner of each seat at the previous election (0,1),[73] ($\beta_{8,9}$ the change in turnout (% of the electorate) at election t and a control for the turnout at the previous election. Separate regressions are run for each party, such that there are Conservative, Labour and LD regressions run for each election. The other two terms are, β_0 the constant and ϵ the error term which are necessary in an OLS regression.

If we replace party Pij for the abbreviated names of the parties it would like as follows:

$$\Delta(Vcon_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Vcon_{t-1} + \beta_2 conSEAT_{t-1} + \beta_3 labSEAT_{t-1} + \beta_4 libSEAT_{t-1} + (\beta_5 natSEAT_{t-1}) - \beta_6 conRET_t - \beta_7 labRET_t - \beta_8 libRET_t + \beta_9 conFIRST_t + \beta_{10} labFIRST_t + \beta_{11} libFIRST_t + \beta_{12} \Delta TO_t + \beta_{13} TO_{t-1} + \epsilon$$

The two critical terms of interest are the binaries β_6, where the Conservative incumbent stands down, and β_9 which is where there is an incumbent re-standing for the first time, the mean of which make the estimate of slurge. The purposes of the other four terms are designed to assess what penalty, if any, the Conservative Party receives when a Labour or Liberal MP restands for the first time, or if they receive any bonus when a Labour or Lib Dem MP retires.

Where a member serves for one term only without re-standing (in the same or successor constituency), it is not treated as a retirement, given they had no incumbency vote the previous election, there should be no retirement slump, neither does it count as a first term surge since they are not re-standing and so for these smaller number of cases, typically no more than one to three per election in elections with no boundary changes,[74] both the RET and FIRST terms are zeroed. The final two terms show the change in turnout at election t as well as a control for the turnout at the previous election. The purpose of using the turnout term is explained fully in section 5.6

This methodology was used in the first stage of the project and a research note (Smith 2013), which was published for the 1983 – 2010 cycle. The slurge measure of the value of incumbency was derived from the mean of the retirement and first term bonus for each election. However, in many elections one of the two was significant and the other not which left it open as to whether the 'slurge' measure of was significant in itself at these elections. In order to solve this issue the model was adapted to make the slurge term a trichotomous variable with -1 being an own party retirement, +1 being an own party first term incumbent restanding, otherwise zero thus:

$$\Delta(VP_{it}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 VP_{it-1} + \beta_{2j} P_{ij} SEAT_{t-1} + \beta_{4j} P_{ij} SLURGE_t [-1, 0, +1] + \beta_5 \Delta TO_t + \beta_5 TO_{t-1} + \epsilon$$

Gelman King Index [GKI]

For Gelman-King Index estimates, the study similarly estimates the following equations for each party:

$$(VP_{it}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 VP_{it-1} + \beta_{2j} P_{ij} SEAT_{t-1} - \beta_{3j} P_{ij} INC_t + \beta_{4j} P_{ij} INC_{t-1} + \beta_5 TO_t + \beta_6 TO_{t-1} + \epsilon$$

Each party's share of the vote in every constituency at election t is run against their vote in election t-1, and tested against their own incumbency status, and opposition parties' statuses in each seat. The critical point is the difference in seats won by each party at the previous election as to whether they have an incumbent standing or not. For example, at the 1959 election, there were 302 seats[75] included in the regressions which the Conservatives won at election t-1, 1955, but only 257 had the incumbent restanding. The term PijINC when used for the Conservatives at the 1959 election will therefore capture the difference in Conservative 1955 held seats between the effects of having an incumbent restanding or not on the party's vote share. In the same way as the slurge model, it will also catch the cross effects on the Conservative vote share in the 1959 when there was a Labour incumbent restanding. So for the Conservatives, fighting 254 Labour held seats at the 1959 the model will show if those in the 228 seats where a sitting Labour MP restood did worse than those in the 26 open Labour held seats.

Multi Election Regressions

In order to test the value of incumbency over the full period multi election regressions have also been run. This methodology remains cross sectional, as opposed to time series, in that it remains data from election t against data from t-1, but with the data from each constituency at each pair of election an individual case. Once excluded cases are removed, there are a total of 8366 rows in the 1959-2010 series. An extra binary dummy variable is added into the regression in order to control for the different trend at each election. For the Conservatives and Labour three multi election regression sets are run, for the full 1959 – 2010 series, for the first seven elections 1959-1979 and the final seven 1983 – 2010 in order to provide an overview of the changes. Multi election regressions are run for the SNP & Plaid from October 1974 – 2010 and 1983 – 2010, for the Liberal Democrats from 1983 -2010 as explained due to data issues in 5.5.

Katz and King criticisms for multi party electoral systems

Katz and King (1999) highlighted some of the issues of using slurge and indeed Gary King's own system in multiparty systems, specifically mentioning the UK. The article expresses concern about shoehorning models that are designed for a two-party system into a multi-party system by creating a pseudo-two party system, the party you are measuring, against everyone else. Other concerns are that there are a low number of sophomores (first time MPs seeking re-election

for the first time) such that only 5% of cases stand out, that opposition parties only partially contest the incumbent party's seats, especially when they win the seats with extremely high margins (scare off effects).

One the first criticism of shoe-horning the data into a pseudo-two party system, if one looks at the average share of the vote of the two major parties for the seats that they held at election t-1 over the full 1955 – 2005 cycle, the averages come out at 51.3% and 54.8% respectively. This actually appears to be a very good base point for creating a pseudo two party system where it is the incumbent versus the other parties, such that the incumbent party has roughly half the vote. One could also add that it has the further advantage over the US system that there are far fewer lopsided results where one party captures such an overwhelming majority of the vote. Labour won over 75% in only 118 of the nearly 8500 rows of data in the full 1955-2005 cycle of election t-1 data. There were only 514 cases of them winning with more than two-thirds of the vote. For the Conservatives the numbers are just seven cases of more than 75% of the vote and 113 for more than two-thirds.

On the second criticism of a small number of sophomores, the figures in the table below in section 5.4 suggest that their analysis is not correct as both parties tend to typically field between 30 and 70 sophomores except in cases after elections which have come very quickly on the heels of another previous election. The slurge method counts retirements as well, which can catch as much as half the Parliamentary party. For example, in 2001, 408 Labour seats are included in the analysis, 187 were sophomores and 37 scored as retirements, thus over half of the Labour cases in the regression.

On the third criticism of partial contestation of the constituencies the project has taken some action to mitigate some of these problems. The criticism is actually unfair for the 1983 – 2010 period since both the Liberal Democrats and Nationalists stood everywhere with only a handful of exceptions, some of which, if sufficiently special cases, were excluded from the regressions. In the 1959 – 1979 series, extra dummy variables have been added into the regressions for seats in which the Liberals or Nationalists intervened or withdrew (see section 5.6 <below>).

5.4 Exclusions and boundary changes

The largest number of cases of exclusions has come from by elections, as the decision has been taken to exclude any seat in which a by election took place in the Parliament prior to election t from the model. Much thought went into the decision to exclude all by elections.

The initial thought to exclude by elections where the seat changed parties mid term, e.g. the Lewisham North by election of 1957, which changed the seat from Conservative to Labour. At the 1959 election, the incumbent MP was Niall McDermott, who was effectively restanding for the first time, but in a seat, which had been Conservative at the 1955 election. Including this would be likely to bias up the value of both Conservative and Labour incumbency in the GKI model

and the value of Labour first term incumbency in the slurge model. Additionally, in by elections where there is a change of party there is almost without exception an outperformance for the party that made the pickup, even if they don't manage to hold onto the constituency. Therefore including such seats is an easy decision in order to remove two sets of bias.

Exclusion of constituencies where there wasn't a change of party was a closer call.[76] The problem with excluding them is that it takes out quite a large number of cases, especially in the 1950s and 1960s when there were as many as 50 by elections per Parliament, and occasionally more than one by election in an individual seat. However, excluding all seats where there has been a by election, prevents distortion of the slurge model. For example, the first by election in Great Britain in the cycle, Gateshead West in Dec 1955, was a Labour hold, Harry Randall held the seat following the death of John Hall. At the 1959 election, one could argue that Randall was standing as a first term incumbent, but also that there was potentially a retirement penalty because any incumbency bonus enjoyed by John Hall had rolled off, or possibly the two effects cancelled one another out, thus it would not be clear whether the slurge status should be set at zero or +1. Finally, there is a risk that bias could be added in by the extra publicity and campaigning that took place in the by election, although this was at the start of the 1955 Parliament, six by elections took place in Great Britain in the calendar year 1959 prior to the election in October.

A number of further cases have been excluded, typically eight to ten, at each election, due to various anomalies. Where there has been an exclusion due to an anomaly at election t, the case is then also excluded at election t+1 to since the anomaly will otherwise affect the results of the regressions for this second election. Criteria for exclusion include: constituencies in which the Speaker was seeking re-election and the very few cases where independents or fourth party candidates were elected. Also excluded are the cases in which incumbent MPs who were expelled or resigned and then stood as independents or for a fourth party, and gained at least 5% of the vote.

Treatment of boundary changes is an important consideration for the project. The fact that estimates of notional results for the new boundaries are available means that it is possible to make estimates for elections after boundary changes without large numbers of exclusions. Treatment of incumbency in cases of boundary changes has to be done carefully because incumbent MPs may effectively move constituency even if the name of their seat remains unchanged. The studies producing notionals for the new boundaries provide four lists of seats. Firstly seats which are effectively abolished, in many cases because their electorate has become too small, and so their territory is chopped up and divided amongst neighbours. Secondly, of new seats, which are created because the electorate in the existing seats in the area has become too large, and thus the area required additional representation.[77] Thirdly, existing constituencies that are completely unchanged, with or without a name change and finally those constituencies which continue but on different boundaries with or without a name change. For this fourth list the studies provide a list matching successor constituencies with their old constituency. A sitting MP is not treated as an

incumbent if at election t they 'move' to a new seat or the seat they contest at election t is not the successor seat to that they won at election t-1, even if it has the same name.[78]

5.5 Summary of the Data

The table below gives a summary of the data over the course of the fourteen general elections from 1959 – 2010. The third row shows the number of seats were included in the regressions for each of the elections. There is a marginal increase as the number of exclusions declines, mainly due to fewer by elections, and there is also a slight increase in the number of the seats in Great Britain. The fourth row shows the number of constituencies for which there was no Liberal candidate standing, in 1959 and 1966 this was more than half of the constituencies included in the regressions, thus it has been necessary to control for this, something that is dealt with by section 5.6.

The next nine rows show the number of valid seats was held for each party at the previous election followed by the total number of incumbents standing in them. Given the GKI model effectively compares incumbent/non incumbent in each seat sorted by the party that held it at election t-1, it is the difference in the two that is the effective *n* of the regression. For the Conservatives and Labour, this is not a problem with the smallest n's being at the October 1974 election, of twelve and six respectively, which came just over seven months after the previous election. Otherwise the smallest n's are 18 for both parties. Many of the largest numbers of seats without an incumbent are in Feb 1974, 1983, 1997 and 2010, due to the additional seats created in boundary reviews. This disproportionately affects the Conservatives as a majority of the new seats have been created in growing suburban areas at the expense of traditionally inner cities.[79]

A problem comes when the Liberal Democrat numbers are assessed. Prior to 1983 there is only one election where there is an n other than zero once the exclusions are removed. This means that apart from the 1970 election no Gelman-King analysis can be done on the Liberals without including by elections. It would actually be much more serious than adding in some bias, because in fact, all the n's would be by elections, thus making it a measure of the consequence of by election changes rather than incumbency. This is the explanation for failing to run any regressions for the Liberals prior to the 1983 election. The rather odd looking 1983 numbers are due to the large number of incumbent defectors who moved from the Labour Party to the SDP in 1981. From 1987 to 1997 there were just two or three vacant Liberal seats at each election, although this improves to seven to 10 in the last three elections.

	1959	1964	1966	1970	1974-F	1974-O	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
GB Seats	618	618	618	618	623	623	623	633	633	634	641	641	628	632
Exclusions	56	62	16	40	35	9	35	24	22	34	29	21	12	22
Valid seats	**562**	**556**	**602**	**578**	**588**	**614**	**588**	**609**	**611**	**600**	**612**	**620**	**616**	**610**
of which														
No Liberal	372	233	307	269	97	3	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con Seat t-1	302	318	283	231	320	296	267	345	386	363	336	158	164	197
Con Inc t	257	281	261	204	241	284	242	264	342	310	224	133	146	150
difference	*45*	*37*	*22*	*27*	*79*	*12*	*25*	*81*	*44*	*53*	*112*	*25*	*18*	*47*
Lab Seat t-1	254	233	311	335	261	295	294	249	199	210	250	408	393	341
Lab inc t	228	202	293	284	225	289	257	164	155	191	208	370	336	240
difference	*26*	*31*	*18*	*51*	*36*	*6*	*37*	*85*	*44*	*19*	*42*	*38*	*57*	*101*
LD Seat t-1	5	5	8	12	6	14	13	11	22	20	19	45	51	63
LD inc t	5	5	8	10	6	14	13	28	20	18	16	38	44	53
difference	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*	*2*	*2*	*3*	*7*	*7*	*10*
Con ret t	43	37	22	26	40	11	25	42	42	53	85	21	18	34
Con first t	55	70	40	19	77	81	12	67	127	52	55	59	33	48
Lab ret t	26	30	18	51	28	6	36	65	43	19	35	37	57	95
Lab first t	33	32	90	64	49	72	21	30	55	63	58	186	37	39
LD ret t	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	4	7	6
LD first t	0	1	3	3	0	5	1	0	8	3	5	25	14	18
NAT ret t	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2
NAT first t	0	0	0	0	1	8	5	0	0	4	2	0	4	3
Con repeat t	32	45	86	75	-	148	46	-	15	15	5	25	46	44
Lab repeat t	39	33	42	23	-	163	30	-	37	65	55	15	20	18
LD repeat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	165	43	102	86	104	110

The next eight rows show the number of incumbents restanding for the first time first time "first t", and those who had been incumbents at election t-1 retiring at election t. For both the major parties there is no problem with small n's since one can effectively sum the two. There are noticeable bulges in the numbers of first time MPs at the election after one of the parties made a large number of gains, for example the 127 new Conservatives in 1987, partly down to boundary changes as well as the 1983 gains, and Labour having had 90 sophomores in 1966 after their 1964 gains, and an enormous 186 new MPs after their triumph in 1997.

The small size of the Liberal party creates problems in the earlier period since until 1987, there was only one valid retirement[80] in the whole series, and in this period Liberal MPs were as likely to die in office than retire.[81] Likewise, there were comparatively few first time Liberal MPs included in the figures since so many of their gains came from by elections mid terms rather than General Election victories. The numbers are large enough for work to be done post 1983 election, but as with the GKI regressions the 1959 – 79 elections are excluded.

The next two rows show the totals for the SNP and Plaid Cymru combined. As with the Liberals, it has been rare to find many nationalist MPs retiring except in the 2001 election when a five chose to stand down, all to pursue a career in the new Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Assembly. For the Nationalist Parties there aren't sufficient numbers to run individual election regressions and so instead multi election regressions have been run for each party against the results in Wales and Scotland respectively.

The final three rows the number of repeat candidates for each of the parties at selected elections. The purpose of the repeat candidate model is explained in full in section 5.8. The numbers are of non incumbent candidates who stood for the

same party at election t-1 in the same constituency as at election t, this can include defeated MPs who restand as a non incumbent at election t. The numbers are fairly steady for the two major parties with typically 30-50 candidates restanding. There were larger numbers of repeat candidates at the 1966 and October 1974 elections, which were held a short time after the previous election. The data shows an element of strategic thinking by repeat candidates, Conservatives had only five repeat candidates in 1997, an election for which they were expected to do extremely badly in the run up to the election, and Labour had low numbers of repeat candidates in 2001 and 2005, elections in which they were defending over 400 seats and thus were very unlikely to be able to pick up more. Finally, in all the elections except 1992, the Liberals had more repeat candidates than the other two parties as section 2.5 shows, many of these were sacrificial lambs who were doing their party a favour.

5.6 Models and controls

Turnout

This is a departure from the US models, which do not include any kind of control for turnout in their models. The purpose of including turnout into the equations is threefold, as a control for any idiosyncrasies in the constituency that might have produced an odd result. Secondly, to account for the fact that the retirement of an incumbent might lead to a change in abstentions, for example, voters may choose to abstain if an MP they liked stands down and they don't like the look of any of the new candidates.[82] Finally, as section 4.4 shows, there are significant variations in turnout regionally and based on socioeconomic factors that need to be controlled in order to prevent potential bias. Extra regressions excluding turnout terms show that whilst they do affect incumbency estimates they do not appear to have any systematic impact.

Geographical controls

As discussed in chapter 4, (sections 4.1 – 4.3) which outline the changes that have been taking place in British politics since the 1950s, and in order to iron out some of the possible biases and indeed randomness, extra controls can be added into the regressions. Chapter 4 showed how there had been a significant current of movement towards the Conservatives in the South and towards Labour in the North.

To give a simplified hypothetical problem, suppose the UK was split into two regions, north and south, and that election t-1 a larger than usual number of Conservatives had been elected in the South for the first time, and then at election t a larger than usual number of incumbents stood down in the North. Suppose there had been a poor performance in the North generally and a positive performance in the South for the Conservatives, such an outcome without any controls could lead to significant bias. The Conservative retirement penalty would appear larger and the first term surge effect would also appear larger, thus increasing the apparent value of incumbency by the slurge estimates. If the results were in the other direction, i.e. a weak performance for the

Conservatives in the South, then the slurge effect would be erroneously estimated to be lower.

The number of retirement cases[83] varies from election and is nowhere near large enough to avoid the risk of a region being over-represented in the data. Whilst there is no obvious reason to expect any kind of systematic bias, e.g. Conservatives in London are more likely to retire earlier than in the North-West, randomness is likely to be enough to cause distortions, especially, for example elections such as October 1974 where there were only 11 retirements.

Table 5.6 Models

A	B	C	D
no control	regions	England only regions	counties

The solution has been to run each regression four times, each with a slightly different control. Table 5.6 displays the model key. A is the regressions for slurge and GKI as set out in the methodology above. Model B adds in a dummy variable for each region of Great Britain, i.e. Wales, Scotland and the nine English Regions.[84] Model C has regional controls, but applies to England only. Model D applies a smaller unit of geographical control and adds dummy variables for each of the 62 counties across the country.

The purpose of model D is to tackle the potential problem that chapter 4 highlights, there can also be considerable variation within regions, for example, Derbyshire trending towards the Conservatives at a faster rate than the East Midlands region as a whole. There is an issue deciding on which structures to use because there were have been three major changes in local Government organization which affected boundaries during the period, the creation of Greater London which came into force in 1965, 1972 Local Government Act, which abolished county boroughs, and created the metropolitan counties, and piecemeal changes in the 1990s which recreated country boroughs under the name of unitary authorities.

The project uses the 1973 -1995 county boundaries for the whole series. The reason for this is that they are the largest available building blocks with an average of just over 10 seats. Secondly, even after the metropolitan counties were abolished and in some cases split into unitary authorities, the former metropolitan counties have been used as review areas for subsequent boundary reviews, with no seats being allowed to cross country boundaries. Finally London is sub-divided into an in inner and outer, in line with the former GLC's statistical areas. Seats that changed country, e.g. Finchley in Middlesex, are treated as being in their 'new' county for the entire period, i.e. outer London.[85]

Socioeconomic controls

At the inception of the project a consideration was to add in socioeconomic controls. For later elections there is a wealth of available data from censuses or

from commercial demographic data such as *Mosaic* or *ACORN*, which gives a snapshot of the population at constituency or ward level, but at earlier elections there is far less available data. Data from earlier censuses is more limited and for censuses prior to 1991 data for sub local authority level or the then extant constituencies was unavailable. Given it would not be possible to apply a consistent approach these controls have not been included.

Liberal and Nationalist intervention

A difficulty for the earlier elections was the fact that there was considerable variation in the number of seats contested by the Liberal Party. From elections from 1983 to 2010 the Alliance and Liberal Democrats contested almost every seat in Great Britain, and all of the exceptions to this have been in seats, which have fallen into exclusion cases. However, as table 5.5 shows, between 1959 and 1979 there was a wide variation in seats that the Liberals did not contest, and which do not fall out under an exclusion, ranging from 372 in 1959 to just three in October 1974. Generally the number of Liberal candidates increased, meaning they intervened[86] in a contest that had been a two-way fight previously, but in some cases the Liberals did not stand in seats that they had contested at the previous election, i.e. withdrawing. The intervention and withdrawal would distort the performance of the two major parties with at least some effect on both them, although this varied considerably. In order to control for this, an additional trichotomous variable, LIBINT [-1,0, +1], has been added into the regressions from 1959 to 1983. The variable is +1 [intervention] when a Liberal stands at election t, having not stood at election t-1, it is zero when a Liberal stands at both election t-1 and election t, or does not stand in both, and -1 [withdrawal] where a Liberal stood at election t-1 but not at election t.

An additional NATINT [-1,0, +1] has been added into seats in Scotland and Wales up until they contested in every seat in October 1974 for the same reason. A decision has been taken not to add controls for the intervention and withdrawal of the Communist Party in 1950s, the National Front and BNP in the 1970s and UKIP and the Greens later on. Until the 2015 election, none of these parties made any material impact on the national election results, although a couple of exclusions of specific seats have been made due to an unusually strong local presence. Whilst the average Liberal candidate typically polled 10-20% of the vote, a typical minor party candidate received no more than 1-2% prior to 2010.[87]

5.7 Variants

Double incumbency

One area of interest highlighted in the Nuffield Study at various elections, but particularly 1979 and 2001, was the phenomenon of double incumbency. Where an incumbent member is defeated by a new candidate from another party at election t-1, there will be two related consequences at the following election, t. Assuming the new MP at election t-1 restands, they can expect to receive a normal sophomore surge, however additionally, the incumbency advantage of the previous MP of another party will roll off giving the new MP an additional advantage.

In order to measure this effect, an additional term binary term "DUB" [0,1] is inserted into the slurge equations. The term is set to 1 where a new MP restanding for the first time defeated a restanding incumbent of another party at the prior election t-1, otherwise the value is set at zero. There is a considerable variation in the number of cases of double incumbency over the period with cases, for each party, only occurring in any sizeable number at elections after which that party has made gains. There are occasionally double incumbency cases caused by seats changing hands against the tide, but these are very often due to local issues. The estimations for the double incumbency term are run using the multi election regressions such that these asymmetries can be controlled.

Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas

The purpose of this variant is to assess if there is any difference in incumbency advantage in smaller compact urban constituencies to large rural ones. There are two main possibilities as to why this could be the case. MPs in urban areas could find it considerably easier to service a smaller geographical area and would be able to meet constituencies much more easily and conveniently than in a larger area. However, it might also be the case that voters behave differently in the two types of constituency, the US literature (Fenno, 1978, Cain et al., 1979) suggests that rural constituencies value a more personal style of constituency service than more impersonal inner cities. Thus, it is plausible that there could be a differential incumbency advantage in either direction.

Defining urban and rural constituencies is tricky since many constituencies on the edge of conurbations could be said to be mixed. The boundary commission designates all seats as either borough or county for election expenses purposes, but many of the designations in the earlier period were for historic reasons, such as the presence of a small but ancient market town, which has been designated as a borough, and usually eponymous to the constituency. Instead, the answer has been to divide the constituencies into those in the metropolitan counties and Greater London, and those outside, as defined above in section 5.6. The advantage of this is that it splits the sample into roughly half and half, over the entire 1959 – 2010 series, 47% of cases are assigned as being in a metropolitan

county. The estimations are done on a multi election basis with two sets of cases, the metro and non-metro.

Differential incumbency by region

The next set of tests follows a similar theme to the previous, in order to test if there is any differential incumbency performance based on regions in England. Multi election slurge tests for 1983 – 2010 have been run region by region comparable to the Wales and Scotland regressions, although without the additional complication of the nationalist parties. There is an additional purpose for these tests as it allows an opportunity to assess if there is any differential performance in the major parties in regions in which they are very strong and very weak, e.g. the Conservatives in the South East or North East. The question comes to mind that incumbency might be more important for the party in areas in which it is generally weaker. A Conservative MP representing a blue patch in an otherwise sea of Labour red might well also stand out.

5.8 Repeat candidates

There has been significantly less research into the effects of opposition candidate effects. Incumbency advantage comes to sitting MPs re-standing for re-election. This section of the research aims to answer the question, what about opposition candidates re-standing for election, is there any advantage in political parties running defeated candidates for a second or third attempt? There are two potential uses for the research. Firstly, it will help answer the question of whether voter recognition of candidates makes a positive difference; repeat candidates would be expected to be better known in the constituency than new ones. It will help disentangle where some of the incumbency advantage comes from. Should repeat candidates enjoy as much of as an advantage as incumbents it would suggest that incumbency advantages comes from being there. It would have policy implications as well; there has been an assumption that for Labour and the Conservatives, young aspirants would contest an undesirable seat in order to gain campaigning experience (Cain et al., 1987).

The hypothesis for the tests for repeat candidates is that they do statistically better than non-repeat candidates, [i.e. the null hypothesis is rejected], but that they do less well than restanding incumbent members of Parliament of their party. The methodology is to add an extra binary term into the GKI regressions for each party, [1] for when the party fields a repeat candidate and zero otherwise. This will also allow for an opposition repeat candidate to affect the performance of an incumbent, and such adds an additional control into the GKI incumbency estimates, which may vary slightly from the originals. These regressions will produce estimates of the value of incumbency and repeat candidacy for the whole period and at individual elections. There are two exclusions, Feb 1974 due to data problems and also 1983 with the unusual scenario of the large number of SDP defections.

A variant of the model has been to look at cases where a candidate stood three times consecutively; there were comparatively few cases for the major parties,

12 Conservatives and 25 Labour candidates from 1987 – 2010. The Lib Dems had 83 cases over the period. This has been done with multi election regressions due to the low 'n'. The purpose of this is to assess if there is any advantage of keeping the same candidate at election after election. The introductory chapter looked a couple of anecdotal cases where repeat candidates achieved success after three or more tries, but this is in itself is not evidence they won because they kept restanding, the question is whether they accrue any additional advantage from repeated exposure.

5.9 Ideology and MPs' incumbency advantage

There is a consensus in the US literature that Members of Congress are mindful of the ideology of their districts in casting their votes in the House, such that those in very lopsided districts are more likely to take a very conservative or liberal line respectively than a district with a very even balance of conservative and liberal voters. Studies generally point to underperformance of hardliners in marginal districts. The purpose of these exercises is to assess if there is any similar such behaviour in the case of UK MPs.

Given the amount of whipping in the UK Parliament with most MPs failing to cast a single vote against the whip, or against the majority of their party in an unwhipped free vote, it is not possible to produce the kind of quantitative left-right score that is available for US Congress members and Senators. The answer to this is to take several high profile votes in which there was a major split amongst the major parties and test if the minority that took a different line did any better or worse at the subsequent election. The study looks at three votes for each party in 2001 – 2005 and 2005 – 2010 Parliaments.

Table 5.9 shows the details of the divisions and what the rebel vote suggests about the MP who cast it. For example, the 72 Labour rebels who voted against an increase in tuition fees could be considered to be highly likely to be to the left of those who supported it. On most of the divisions the cleavage is on the social liberal / social conservative axis, and unsurprising since free or one-line whips are much more likely on conscience issues such as abortion or same-sex partnerships. On the Lisbon Treaty there were two divisions in which both Conservative and Labour MP's took a more Eurosceptic position than their party line. This gives an opportunity to have another look at observations from the Nuffield Study that found that there was no advantage for Conservative Eurosceptics at the 1997 election. Finally, the Iraq War vote said more about an MP's position on Britain's place in the world and foreign policy interventionism, its significance is more to do with the fact that by the time of the 2005 election the War had become extremely unpopular, and so the question is if there was any benefit to MPs who could say they had opposed it.

The methodology for this set of tests is comparatively simple, a binary variable is added to the slurge regressions, models B and D both tested, set to [1] where the incumbent MP voted with the minority described in the above and stood for re-election in the same constituency[88] at the subsequent election. The object of the test is to see if the null hypothesis that the variables are insignificant is rejected,

and if so, in which direction. If the US experience of relative moderates outperforming more hardline Congress members, one might expect Labour MPs who are more socially conservative to outperform and the same for more socially liberal conservatives.

Table 5.9 Summary of divisions

Subject	Date			Number of rebels / MPs in the minority
2001 - 2005	**Labour**			
Iraq War	19th Mar 2003	Minority position subsequently popular	Whipped	**139**
Voted for an amendment stating 'The case for war had not yet been made.'				
Top-up Tuition Fees	27th Jan 2004	Minority to the left of the whip	Whipped	**72**
Voted against second reading of the Higher Education Bill				
Smacking	2nd Nov 2004	Minority more socially liberal	Whipped	**49**
Voted for a rebel amendment to prohobit parents smacking children				
2005 - 2010	**Labour**			
Animal Rights	14th Mar 2006	Minority more socially conservative	Free vote	**71**
Voted for an amendment banning dog tail-docking in working dogs				
Europe	5th Mar 2008	Minority more Eurosceptic	Whipped	**28**
Voted for a Conservative Amendment proposing a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty				
Abortion	20th May 2008	Minority more socially conservative	Free vote	**60**
Voted against the majority of PLP in favour of amendment reducing the abortion limit to 22 weeks				
2001 - 2005	**Conservatives**			
Section 28	10th Mar 2003	Minority more socially liberal	**Whipped**	**23**
Voted in favour of repealing Section 28 of the Local Government Act				
Iraq War	19th Mar 2003	Minority position subsequently popular	**Whipped**	**16**
Voted for an amendment stating 'The case for war had not yet been made.'				
Civil Partnerships	9th Nov 2004	Minority more socially conservative	**Whipped**	**39**
Voted against 3rd reading of the Civil Partnerships Bill				
2005 - 2010	**Conservatives**			
Animal Rights	14th Mar 2006	Minority less socially liberal	**Free vote**	**57**
Voted against ban on cosmetic dog tail-docking				
Europe	5th Mar 2008	Minority more Eurosceptic	**Whipped**	**40**
Voted for a rebel amendment from Bill Cash proposing supremecy of UK law				
Abortion	20th May 2008	Minority more socially liberal	**Free vote**	**27**
Voted against reducing the abortion limit to 22 weeks				

5.10 Incumbency advantage versus polarization and partisan dealignment

The final set of tests takes the results of the earlier regressions on incumbency advantage as the dependent variable to test for correlation with polarization and partisan dealignment. As section 4.5 and 4.6 have shown, changes in partisanship amongst the electorate and the changes in polarization of the parties has been a major consideration in British Politics during the 1955 – 2010 period in the project. As has been shown in chapters 2 & 3, the US literature cited the decline in partisan loyalty amongst US voters as one of the key reasons that that incumbency advantage increased from 2% in the 1950s to as much as 8% by the 1980s. Likewise, US authors have shown that incumbency advantage is negatively correlated with the polarization of the two parties, that in periods such as the 1970s and 1980s when their positions were close, there was a higher incumbency advantage. The expectation would be that should these two factors be significant in the UK that they would be in the same direction as in the United States such that incumbency advantage would be negatively correlated with partisanship amongst the voters and polarization amongst the voters.

For the independent variables of partisanship and polarization the project has used the data from section 4.5-6. The partisanship variable is defined as the percentage of the other major party's strong supporters minus the percentage of weak supporters. Thus, for a Labour regression the Conservative partisanship would vary from +40.3 in 1970 to -23.5 in 2010. As discussed in section 4.6, the dataset is incomplete and thus the 1959 figure has been set to the same as 1964, whilst the 2005 and 2010 figures have been based off the 2001 results of the British Election Study. For the polarization, the variable used is the absolute difference between the Conservative and Labour manifestos based off the index created in section 4.6, which ranges from zero in 2001 to 25.4 in 1983. Table 5.10 shows the values of the independent variables used. Given the polarization index is arbitrary, the point of the exercise is to assess whether or not the coefficients are significant rather than their size or scale.

The regressions are run for each party using the value of their Gelman King and Slurge values of incumbency at each election. An extra test has been added which takes the sum of the party's own party incumbency advantage from slurge effects and the amount the other party's vote falls "slurge versus opposition". For example, at the 2010 Labour slurge model showed a 1.67% own party advantage, combined with the fall in the Conservative vote in response to slurge effects and this rises to 2.05%. The results of models A & B are used for both parties, for the GKI, Slurge and Slurge versus opposition regression.

There is a key control, which is required to prevent the regressions picking up a spurious correlation and that is the time/date. Given partisanship dropped, almost linearly over the period, whilst incumbency gradually increased, without any control for time/date, the results of the regression are certain to be negative and significant, but be meaningless other to confirm a negative cross correlation with time. The question that needs to be answered is if there is a correlation once the time factor is controlled. The way this has been done is to code the 1959 election as zero and then each subsequent election coded as the number of

days after the date of the 1959 election. This could have been done as months or years, it makes no difference other than scale.

	Con partisan	Lab partisan	Polarization	Time/Date
1959	36.7	40.2	4.45	-
1964	36.7	40.2	7.01	1,834
1966	38.1	45.5	6.22	2,366
1970	40.3	33.8	3.77	3,906
1974-F	13.5	24.1	19.17	5,257
1974-O	8.2	21.1	15.59	5,481
1979	2.8	7.9	19.08	7,147
1983	3.2	2	25.40	8,645
1987	0.4	-0.3	15.92	10,108
1992	-6.7	-5.2	18.89	11,872
1997	-15.1	-10.05	4.99	13,720
2001	-23.5	-14.9	0.06	15,218
2005	-23.5	-14.9	2.11	16,646
2010	-23.5	-14.9	0.13	18,473

Three models have been run for these tests. I is a simple regression, the dependent variable of incumbency against either polarization, partisanship and the time control. Model II adds the party vote and turnout numbers, at GB level, at election t and election t-1 into the regression. Model III runs both partisanship and polarization at the same time, along with time, the party vote and turnout as in model II and the number of first time and retirees at election t.[89]

Chapter 6 Results

Explanation and presentation of the results

Table 6.0 - Adjusted GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

MODEL A			INCUMBENT	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM
2010	CON VOTE	1.428**	-0.336	-4.108**
	LAB VOTE	-0.085	2.226**	-2.197
	LD VOTE	-0.623	-1.416**	5.242**

** Significant at the 1% level

* Significant at the 5% level

The nature of the project means that with results run for three parties, fourteen general elections, two different methods and four models for each, that there are an extremely large number of individual results. The tables of all the results are grouped together at the end of the chapter. Before one can begin interpreting the results and answering the questions that the thesis seeks to answer, some explanation about what the actual information in the tables and the visualizations actually means is necessary.

The above image 'table 6.0' shows part of table 6.1 for the results of the 2010 election. Table 6.1 presents the results for the Gelman-King method of measuring incumbency using the model A approach which is the simplest of the models, without any controls other than the adjustment for turnout (see chapter 5 <above> for the full breakdown of the methodology). The vertical columns show the coefficients obtained for each party when the value of the variable incumbent =1. The first box at the top left shows the coefficient estimating the effect on the Conservative share of having a Conservative incumbent MP against not having an incumbent Conservative MP. Therefore, taking account who held the seat at the previous election, it means that the Conservatives did just over 1.4%-points better at the 2010 election in seats they had held in 2005 where the incumbent restood. The result is statistically significant at the 1% level of confidence. The next box to the right in the top row shows how the Conservative vote was affected by the presence of a Labour incumbent in seats Labour had won in 2005. The Conservative vote-share is estimated to have 0.336%-points lower in such seats in comparison to where there was no Labour incumbent re-standing, however, although the sign is the expected way round, it is not significant at the 5% confidence level. The final box on the top row shows the effect on the Conservative share of the vote of the presence of a Liberal Democrat incumbent, in seats the centre-party had won in 2005. This shows the Conservatives did over 4%-points worse in such seats, significant at the 1% level.

The second row shows the results of the next regression in which the Labour vote was run against the presence of incumbents of all three parties. The middle box shows the Labour vote in cases where there was a Labour incumbent in seats the party had won at the previous election in 2005. Labour did just under 2.3% better in such seats, where the incumbent re-stood against in Labour held

seats in which there was no own party incumbent. The presence of Conservative and Liberal Democrat incumbents in seats held by these party in 2005 gives a negative coefficient, the latter appearing to take more than 2%-pts off the Labour vote, but neither are statistically significant. The final row shows the effect the presence of incumbents has on the Liberal Democrat vote share. The Conservative coefficient is statically insignificant, but in seats won by Labour in 2005 where Labour incumbents re-stood in 2010, the Lib Dem vote share was reduced by a statistically significant 1.4%-pts. Finally, in their own 2005 seats where an incumbent restood, their vote share was over 5.2% higher than in their seats where there was no incumbent.

These cross tabs are able to offer two areas of data, which can be considered in more detail. The tabs highlighted in green diagonally across the grid indicate each party's own party incumbency effect, i.e. the effect on their own vote share in seats they held at the previous election when they restand. The two cells in the same column as the own party's incumbency coefficient can be used to assess from which of the other party's the incumbent's advantage came. For example, the Liberal Democrats' own party 5.2% advantage must have come from either the Conservatives, Labour, another party, or voters who would not otherwise have voted at all (change in turnout). In this case, though, the results suggest that most of the Liberal Democrat incumbency advantage came from a decline in the Conservative vote, which falls 4.1%-points in the presence of an LD incumbent whilst the Labour number is insignificant. Meanwhile, Labour's incumbency advantage appears to come mostly from otherwise Liberal Democrat voters, whilst the Conservative incumbency advantage cannot be statistically linked to otherwise voters of either Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

6.1 Multi election tests of the GKI incumbency model

As discussed in part five, there is a natural break in the data at the half way point, 1979/83, with the Liberals and SDP standing in all constituencies and turning what had been a two-and-a-half party system into a three party one, at least up until the 2010 election. Each model has three sets of regressions being run, one for the earlier 1959 – 1979 period, a second from 1983-2010 and a third for the whole period. Table 6.1 presents the results <below>. For the reasons discussed in part 5 the Alliance/Liberal Democrat numbers are only run for the 1983-2010 period, and so the for the other elections only the Labour and Conservative numbers are included.

With three periods and four models, there are 12 estimates for Conservative and Labour own party incumbency given in the table. The most important point to note is that own party incumbency is significant for almost all cases. Every coefficient for the Conservatives across all the three periods is significant at no less than the 5% level. Labour own party incumbency is significant in the full period and later 1983-2010 period in all models, and is significant at the 1% level in model C in the earlier 1959-1979 period. The Liberal Democrat own party incumbency advantage is significant at the 1% level in all four models for the 1983 – 2010 period.

The Conservative results show an increase in the value of own party in an almost uniform stepped increase. Three of 1959-1979 models produce an estimate of that incumbency was worth 0.5 to 0.6% of the vote, with the England only model C a slight outlier valuing it at 0.4%. In the 1983 – 2010 the value of incumbency advantage is estimated to have estimated to have been worth from 0.8% to just under 1% of the vote. The estimates for the full period come out close to an average of the two sub periods with the a range of 0.6% in model C to just over 0.7% for the other three models.

The Labour results show the same trend seen in the Conservative Party's results with an increase from the first period to the second period. The 1959-1979 results are positive, but insignificant except the England only model C, that shows an estimated own party incumbency of 0.83%. For the full period, the own party incumbency advantage rises from to a range 1.1% to 1.6% in England only model, higher than the Conservative estimates for any of the three periods. The 1983-2010 show the strongest of all the Labour own party incumbency estimates with a range of 1.6 to 1.9% close to double the value of the Conservative incumbency advantage.

The Liberal Democrat numbers from 1983 – 2010 show a very large own party incumbency advantage of between 7.6% in model C to close to 8.2% of the vote in the other three models. This puts the Lib Dem advantage in a different order to the other major parties, being at least four times the Labour numbers and at least eight times the Conservative advantage. It is already very good evidence for the anecdotal remark that once Lib Dems get established they take a generation to remove from office.

Summary

Four main findings come from the multi election regressions. Firstly incumbency does matter. For all three parties own party incumbency numbers are mostly statistically significant, and especially for the later period. Secondly, for the two major parties there has been an increase in the value of the incumbency advantage from the 1959-1979 period to the 1983-2010 cycle, in Labour's case it has more than doubled. Thirdly, the incumbency advantage is not equal, with the Liberal Democrats having an extremely large incumbency advantage, much larger than the two major parties. There is also a difference between the two major parties with Labour's own party incumbency advantage apparently close to double that of the Conservatives in the 1983 – 2010 period. Finally, there is an asymmetry in the source of incumbency advantage, with Labour incumbents being able to pick up votes from otherwise Conservative supporters, something that doesn't appear to work the same way, whilst the much larger Liberal Democrat bonus appears to come equally from the two major parties.

6.2 Single election regressions of the GKI incumbency model

Fourteen general elections with four models mean there are a large number of results to display. Tables 6.2A-D give the full results of the regressions from

1959 -2010 for all the four models used to measure incumbency by the GKI method. The way that this section will unfold to start by looking at the own party incumbency advantage party-by-party and then compare them. It will then go on to explore what the cross tabs show about where the source of incumbency advantage.

Own party incumbency advantage

The visualizations on the next pages show the own party incumbency advantage at each election in the series. The source for the data is in tables 6.2A-D. The first visualization shows the own party incumbency advantage for the Conservatives using model A. The 1959 result of minus 0.054% is taken from the first box on table 6.2A, and the 1964 result of 0.440% of the vote taken from the next box in the series. As well as showing the estimates of incumbency advantage the visualizations show which of the results were statistically significant at a minimum of 5%, the circles with clear centres indicate results which are not statistically significant, thus the graph for the first model shows the Conservative own party incumbency advantage is only significant at five of the 14 elections, October 1974, 1992, 2001, 2005 & 2010. On the right hand side of the visualizations, is shown the results of the multi election regressions for the same model, taken from table 6.1.

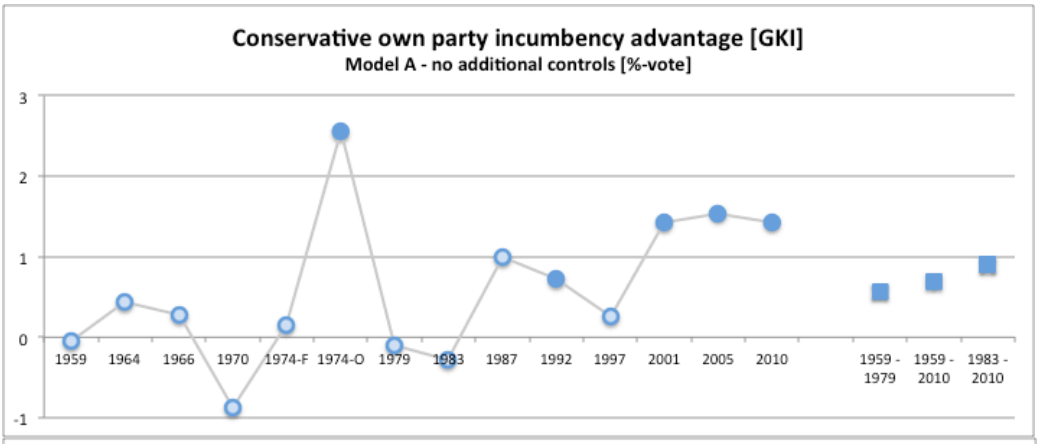
Conservatives

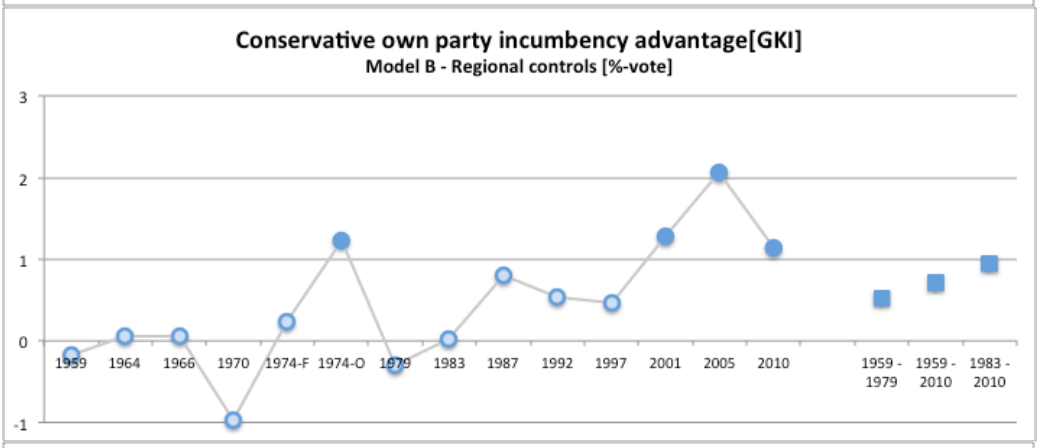
The results as shown in the visualizations demonstrate that taken at individual elections, not many of the estimates are statistically significant. The four models are only in agreement that the incumbency effect was positive and statistically significant in three of the 14 elections, the most recent, 2001 – 2010. Two of the four models find that there was a positive and significant incumbency effect in 1992 and also in October 1974, whilst one of the models (C - England only), finds that incumbency was negative and significant with a coefficient of -0.9% in 1970. Meanwhile, all twelve of the multi election regressions were significant and positive as discussed in the last chapter. The likely answer to the difference between the difference in significance between the two sets of results is due to the fact that the multi election regressions smooth out some of the aberrations at each individual election, and also have a far larger number of n's which reduces the chance of the coefficient being swamped by the error term.

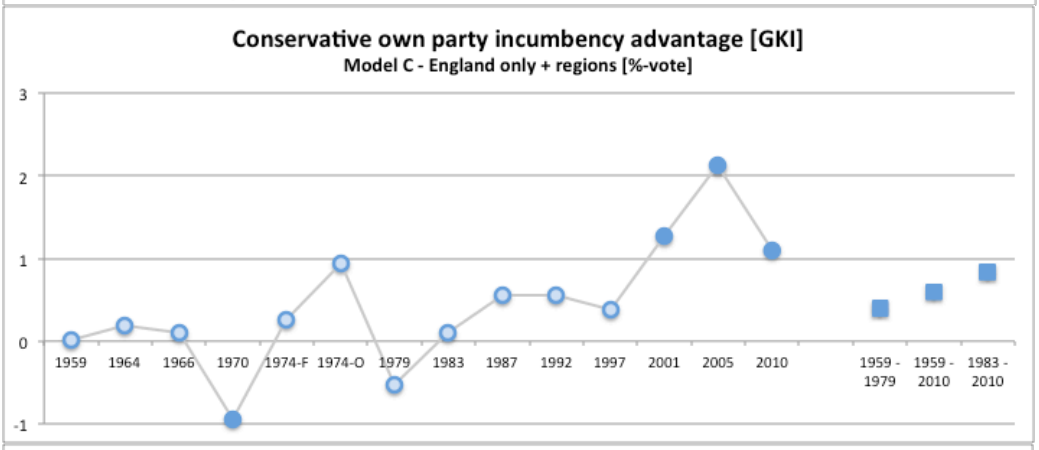
For the last three elections, in which there was evidence of statistically significant own party incumbency advantage, the 2001 data shows an advantage of 1.3 to 1.4%, 1.5 to 2.1% for 2005 and 1.1 to 1.5% for the 2010 election. All of these are above the 1983 – 2010 multi election estimates of just under 1%. At the October 1974 election, the first model shows an incumbency advantage of 2.5%, the second 1.2% whilst the other two models show an insignificant coefficient. It is not clear whether there was anything special about this election, given it was essentially a repeat election, or the fact that the fact that there were a larger number of repeat candidates meant that there was a low n which let in a distortion.[90] Models A and D show a significant incumbency advantage of 0.6 to 0.7%, in line with the 1959 -2010 multi election regression, but below the 1983 –

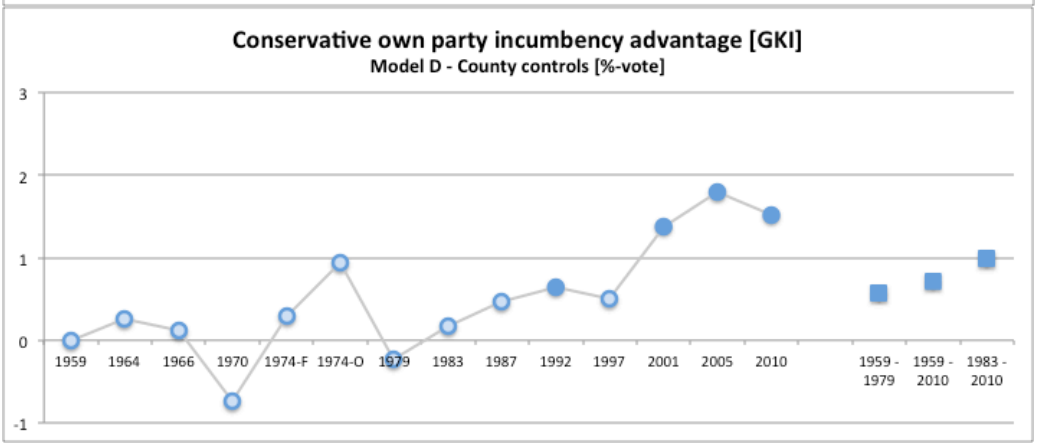
2010 multi election level. The data does support the tentative conclusion from the multi-election regressions that the incumbency advantage has increased over the period from zero to a level of 1-2% in the past three elections in the cycle.

Visualizations of Conservative Party own party incumbency advantage

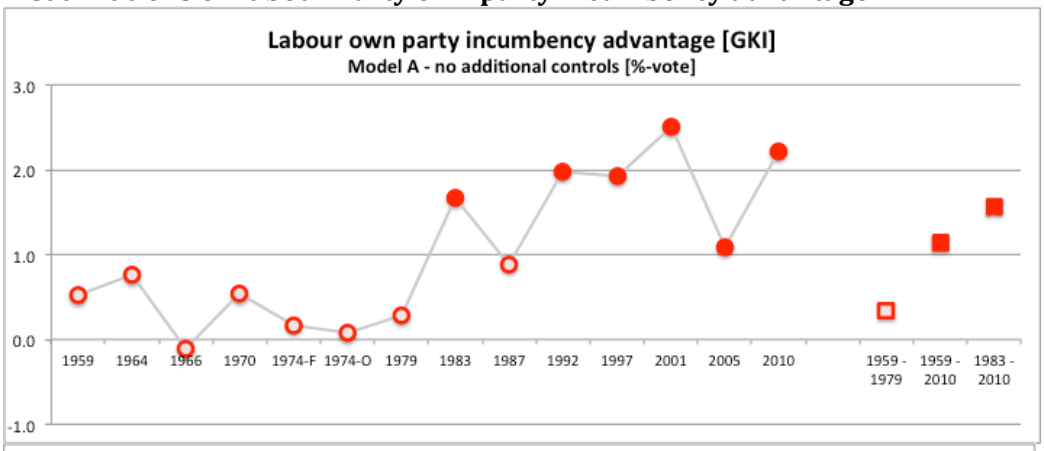


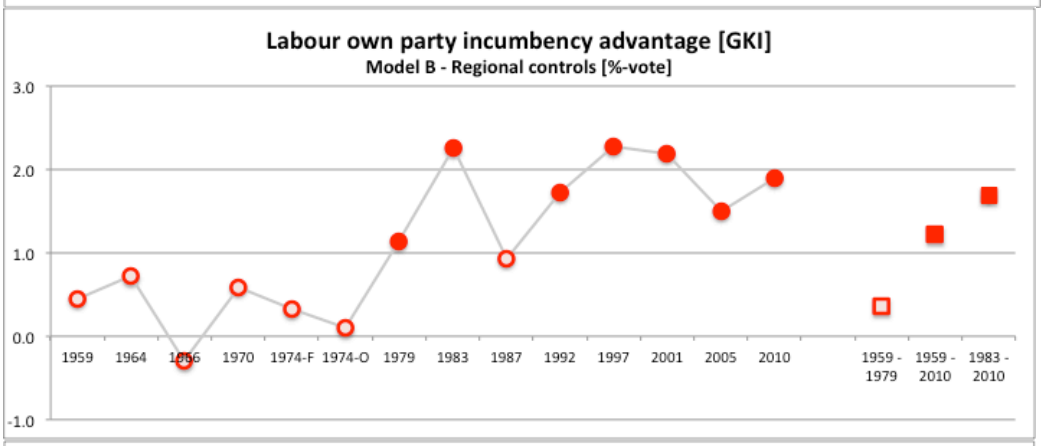


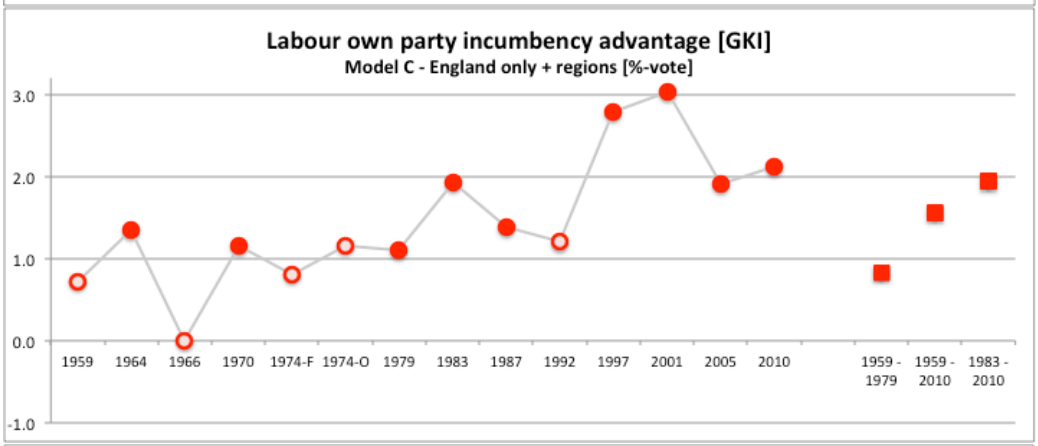


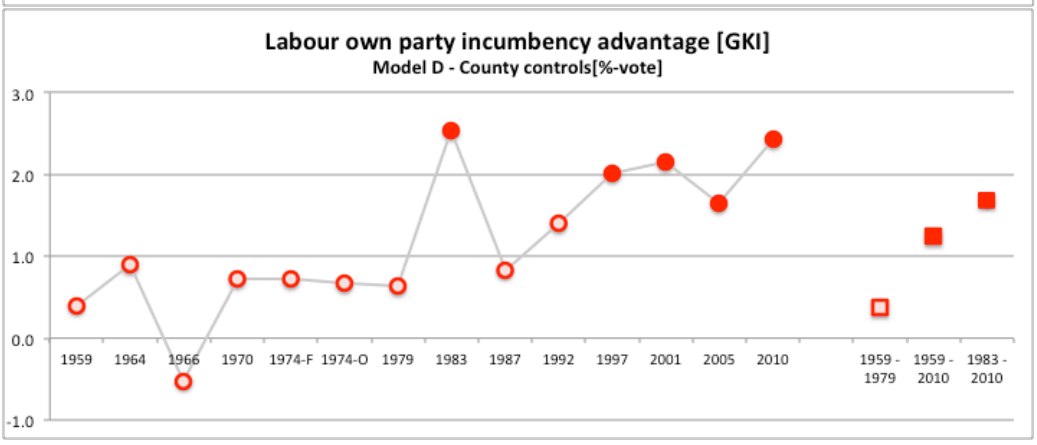


Visualizations of Labour Party own party incumbency advantage

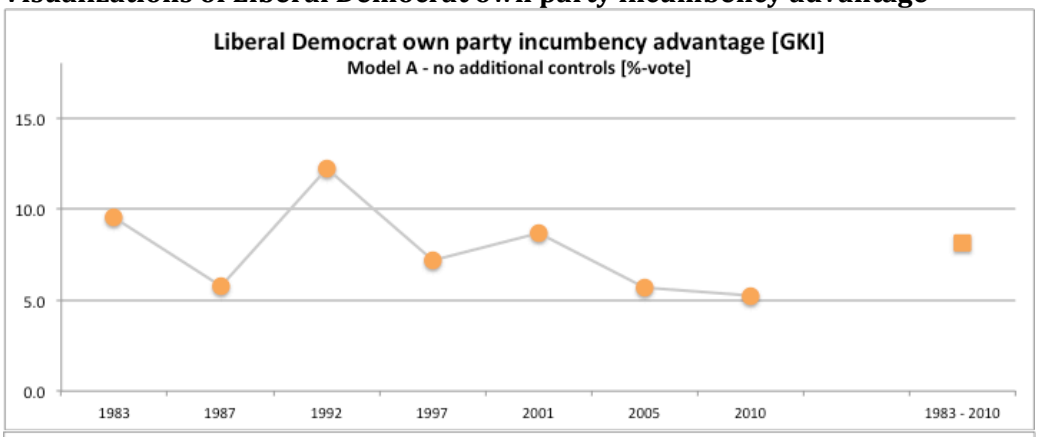


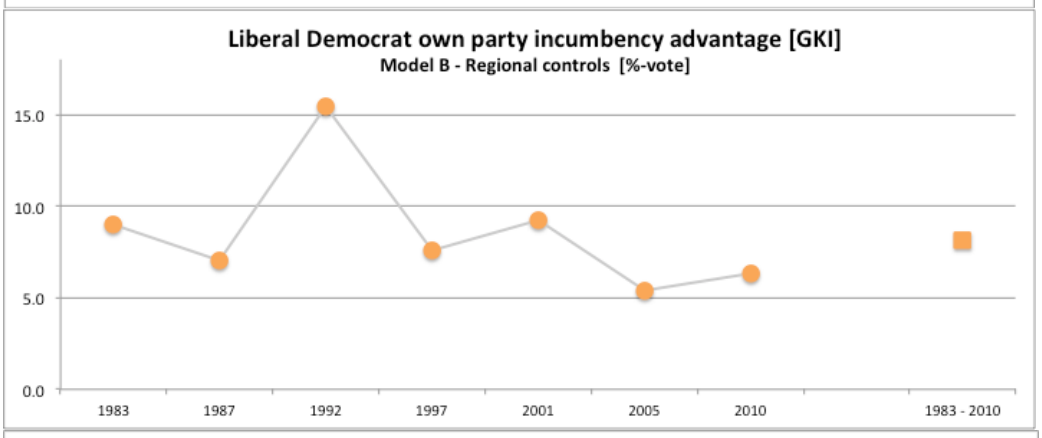


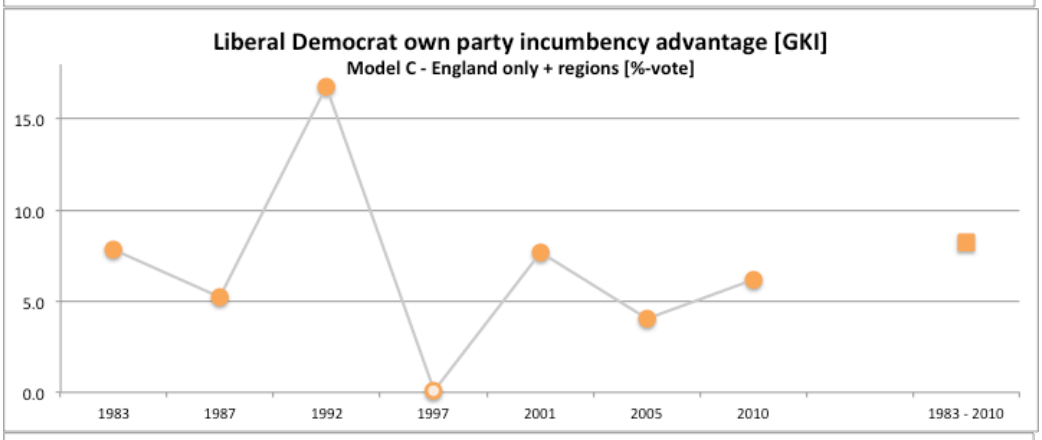


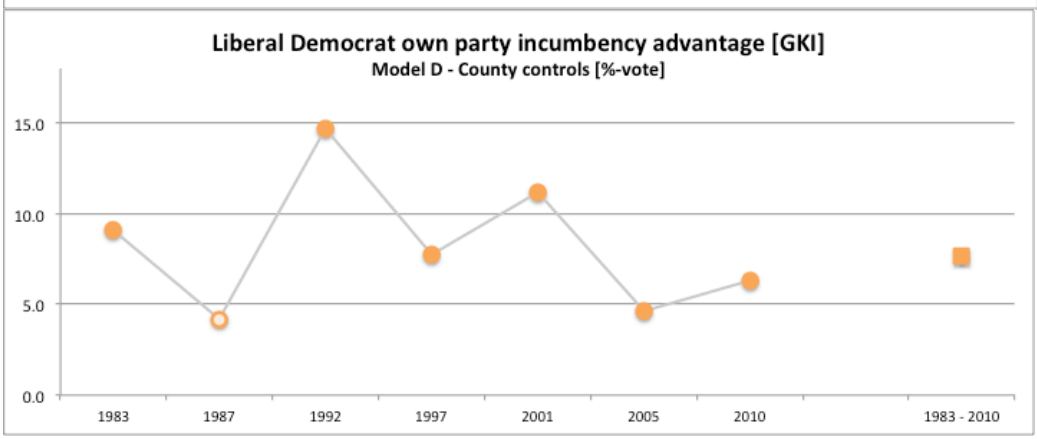


Visualizations of Liberal Democrat own party incumbency advantage









Labour

The Labour estimates show that the incumbency advantage was positive and statistically significant in more elections than the Conservative results estimate. The four models all agree it was significant at the four latest elections 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2010, as well as 1983. Two of the four models show it was significant in 1979 and 1992, whilst the England only model C shows it was significant in 1964 and 1970. As discussed in the previous section only model C has Labour incumbency significant in the multi election regressions from 1959 – 1979 earlier period.

Looking at individual elections, model C finds the incumbency advantage worth just over 1% in 1964, 1970 and 1979. There is also a similar estimate of 1.1% in model B for the 1979 election. There was a peak at the 1983 election with an own party incumbency advantage range of 1.7 – 2.3% significant in all four models. Models A and B find a positive and significant incumbency advantage of 2% and 1.8% respectively at the 1992 election. For 1997 and all elections on, the incumbency advantage is significant in all four models with a range of 1.9 - 2.8%, for 2001 2.1 - 3%, for 2005 1.1 – 1.9%, and 2010 1.9% - 2.4%.

The results add weight to the tentative conclusions of the multi election regressions that the Labour own party incumbency advantage is positive and significant, and that it has been increasing over the study period. It also suggests that it is larger than the Conservative incumbency advantage. In cases where both parties had significant coefficients at a given election, with the exception of 2005, Labour's were larger than the Conservatives' ones. Such that whereas the Conservatives enjoyed an advantage of around 1.5% in 2001 and 2010, Labour's were more like 2.5%.

There is clearly no correlation between the incumbency advantage and the party's position or performance in the said election. Labour seems to have enjoyed high incumbency advantage numbers at elections at which they did badly, such as 1983 and 2010,. However, they also did well in their year of triumph in 1997, and at the 2001 election, which was basically a no-change election for Labour from a high base. There is also no obvious difference between elections when they were in office or in opposition. There are a couple of anomalies, the high number in 1983 may be due to defections to the SDP, even excluding these seats from the regressions means that there is some manner of distortion. The apparent low number in 2005 may have been due to the "Iraq War effect"

Liberal Democrats

Of the 28 regressions run, there are only two examples in which the own party incumbency coefficient fails to be significant, that of 1997 in model C and 1987 in model D. Aside from these, the incumbency advantage is estimated to have been worth no less the 4.6% and as much as 16.8%. The three best elections were 1983, with a range of 7.8 to 9.5%, 1992 with a range of 14.7 to 16.8% and 2001 with an advantage of 7.7 to 11.2%. The lowest significant coefficients are found

at the end of the period with the 2005 and 2010 numbers all lower at 4.1 to 6.3% than the multi election averages of 7.6 to 8.2%.

Looking at the best and worst results in the series, there does not appear to be a correlation with the party's overall performance. The 1983 peak was at the election at which the Liberals formed a pact with the SPD and increased the vote share by nearly 12%-pts. The peak in 1992 meanwhile, was at a comparatively bad election at which the vote share fell by just under 5% and finished two seats short of the Alliance total in 1987.[91] The 2001 election saw a large number of Liberal Democrats seeking re-election for the first time having taken 18 seats from the Conservatives in the sweep of 1997, whilst their share of the vote increased 1.5%. The lowest incumbency numbers in 2005 and 2010 came at the time when the party was defending the largest number of seats in the series, 52 in 2005 and 62 in 2010, so the question could be asked as to whether the party's unusually large incumbency advantage may have been diluted by the fact that having a Lib Dem MP was not so much of a rarity.

6.3 Slurge model results

Looking at the multi election regressions, the results of which are in table 6.3 <below>, the first thing that stands out is that all the major party own incumbency coefficients are significant at the 1% level, including all the estimates for the 1959 – 1979 which was a much more doubtful period in the GKI model. All of the Lib Dem 1983 – 2010 series incumbency coefficients are at least significant at the 5% level.

The slurge estimates of the Conservative incumbency advantage are very similar to those in the GKI model. The 1959-1979 range comes out at 0.3 to 0.4% versus 0.4 to 0.6%, the full period estimates are identical at 0.6 to 0.7% and the later 1983-2010 period are 0.9 to 1% versus 0.8 to 1% GKI. For Labour the slurge coefficients are marginally higher, with the earlier period at a significant 0.6 - 0.8%, versus a GKI range of 0.3 to 0.8%, three of the estimates being insignificant. The full period slurge estimates are 1.3 to 1.5% versus a GKI of 1.1 to 1.6%, whilst the later period produces estimates of 1.8 to 2% for slurge against 1.6 to 1.9% for GKI. The Lib Dem estimates however, are considerably lower with slurge coefficients of 4.3 to 4.8% for the 1983 -2010 period versus 7.6 to 8.2% GKI estimates.

The results of the individual elections using the slurge methodology estimate a much greater degree of significance for the incumbency advantage than the GKI model did, especially for the earlier period. For the Conservatives, the four models agree that incumbency was significant at six of the 14 elections, 1964, Oct 1974, 1987, 1992, 2005 and 2010. Two of the models find significance at the 1997 election. The GKI method only found three elections in which all four models all found significance.

Looking at individual results in more detail, the 1964 and October 1974 results show an incumbency advantage worth between 0.6 to 0.9% of the vote, above the multi election averages for the 1959 – 1979 period and more in line with the estimates for the whole of the period. There is a step up in the next period with

the party estimated to have had incumbency advantages of 0.8 – 1.4% at the 1987 and 1992 elections, and in the final two in the series, 2005 and 2010, the estimates rise to 1.5 to 2%. Thus, there is something of an agreement with the GKI estimates that the value of the incumbency advantage has been on the increase. One anomaly in the data is the fact that the model picks up no significance for the incumbency advantage at the 2001 election, this is contrary to the GKI model which found it worth around 1.5%, as well as other research such as the Nuffield Study which also found significance.[92]

Another difference with the GKI estimate is that there does appear to be a tentative pattern, at least prior to 2005, in that all the elections in which significance is found, were ones in which the tide was running away from the Conservatives. There was a swing to Labour in 1964, October 1974, 1987, 1992, and most of all in 1997. That Conservative incumbency was significant in 1964 and October 1974, when Labour's majority emerged at just 4 seats in both cases presents a what-if. Likewise, without an incumbency advantage in 1992, could the Conservatives have won their narrow majority of 21? Meanwhile, for all the elections, prior to 2005, in which there was a swing from Labour to the Conservatives, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1983 and 2001, there is no significance for incumbency. There doesn't appear to be any obvious correlation between the party being in office or opposition and whether incumbency is significant or not.

The results of the slurge methodology regressions produce statistically significant incumbency estimates for the Labour Party for almost all the elections in the series. The only election at which there is no significance in any of the models is the 1959 election. The only other gaps are at the February 1974 election, in which three of the models fail to find significance, and the 1979 in which model A finds no significance. Otherwise, every estimate is positive and significant and no lower than 0.6%.

With the exception of an anomaly in 1983, there is considerably less volatility in the value of the slurge estimates of Labour incumbency from election to election, than in the GKI model. The visualizations neatly demonstrate two apparent phases with the interruption in 1983. In the first period, from 1964 to October 1974, Labour incumbency is positive, significant and ranging from 0.6 to 1.1%, at the upper end of the multi election estimates for the 1959-1979 multi election regressions. The 1979 results are mixed, with one insignificant estimate and three others with a wide range of 0.6 to 1.6%. The 1983 results see a spike to as much as 3%, similar to the spike seen in the GKI model, but more pronounced. The value of incumbency then settles down for the rest of the period to a range of 1.2 to 2.4%, but with the majority of estimates coming in a tighter range of 1.5 to 2%. There is little evidence of a trend in the period with the exception that all four models show a decline in the value of incumbency from 2005 to 2010.

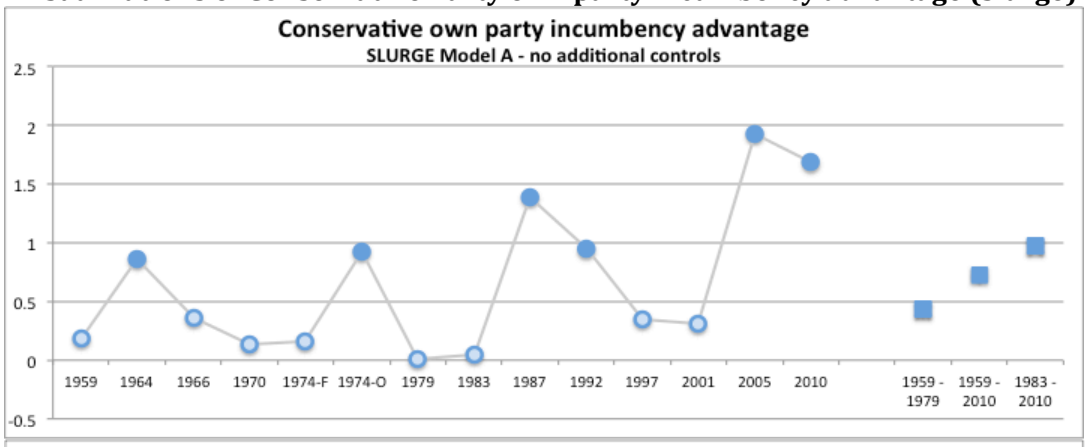
As per the GKI estimates, there appears to be no link whatsoever to the significance or value of incumbency and whether the Labour party did well or badly at an election, or whether they were in Government or opposition. Even though SDP defections are excluded from the estimates, the 1983 results may have been affected by the fact that many other incumbents who did not defect

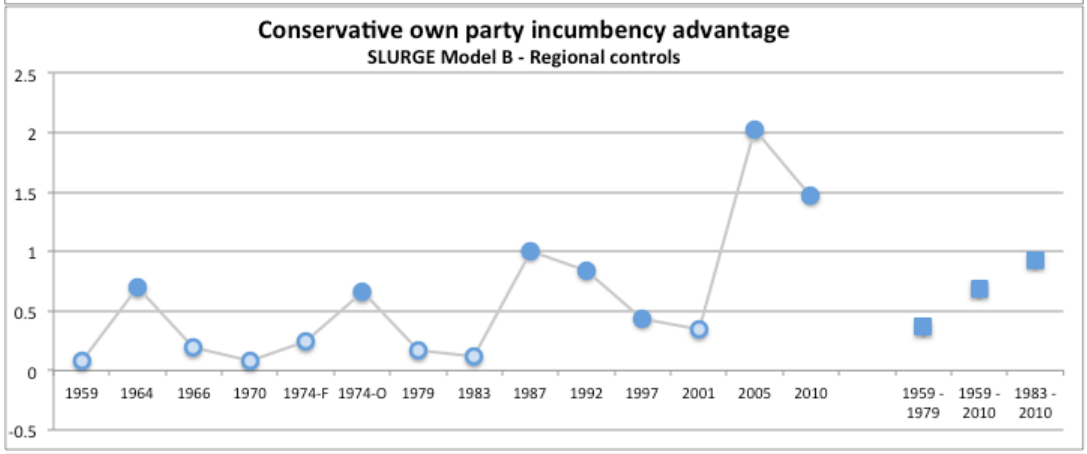
who were quietly pushed aside by their local parties, or chose to throw in the towel. The other side of the apparent high value of incumbency in 1983 may be that Labour damaged itself by forcing Labour moderates out and thus suffering a retirement penalty in these seats. The key conclusion though is that incumbency clearly increased from the early to the later part of the period, although not evenly.

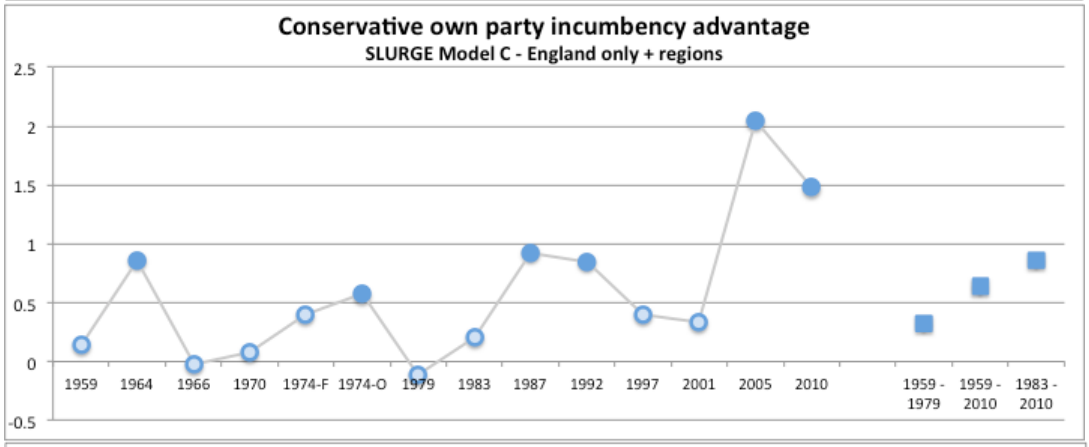
The slurge methodology is much more cautious about the significance incumbency advantage that was estimated by the GKI methodology at individual elections. The four models are only unanimous about the significance of the incumbency coefficients at three of the seven elections, the last three, 2001-2010. The England only method is not used for the 1983 election due to lack of appropriate cases,[93] and the other three UK wide models do find any significance for incumbency at this election. None of the models find any significance for incumbency at the 1992 election, two reject its significance at the 1987 election, and the England only model rejects it for 2001 as well.

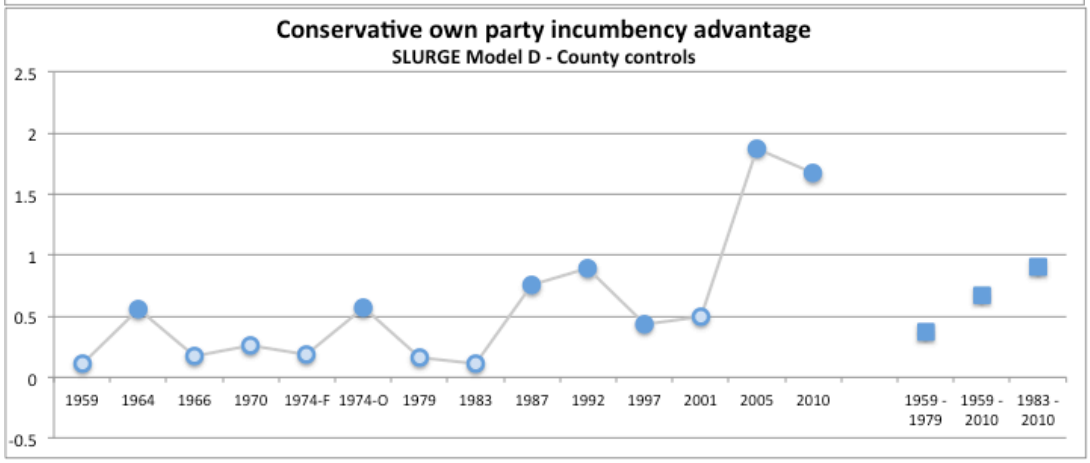
The values for the Lib Dem incumbency are also much more modest than estimated by the GKI model. The 1983 result stands out as an exception, with a range of the three estimates from 10.9 to 21.4%. The caveat on that should be the very low n for that election. The rest of the significant estimates are remarkably uniform with a range of 3.8 to 4.6% with a two outliers above 5%. These estimates very much line up with the multi election estimates of 4.3 to 4.8%. There is no evidence of any trend other than the drop from the 1983 results, which itself looks like an outlier.

Visualizations of Conservative Party own party incumbency advantage (slurge)

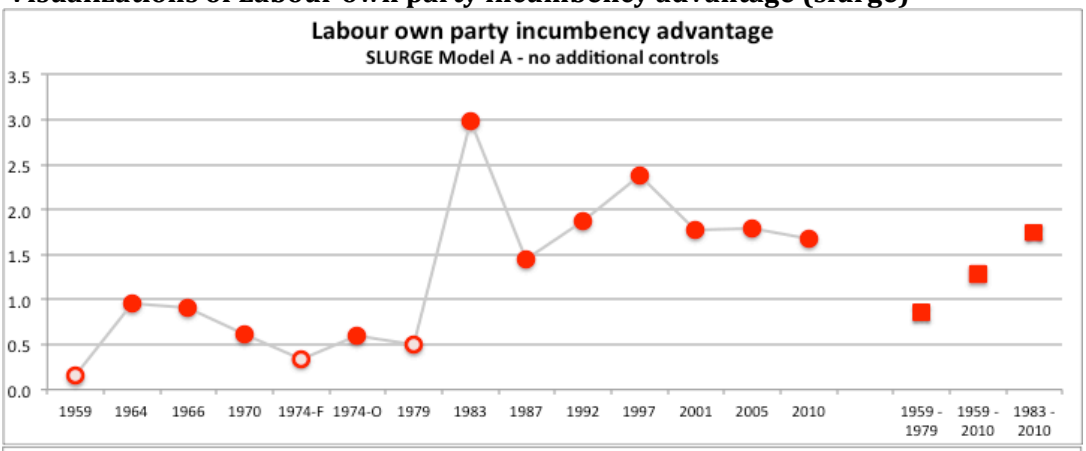


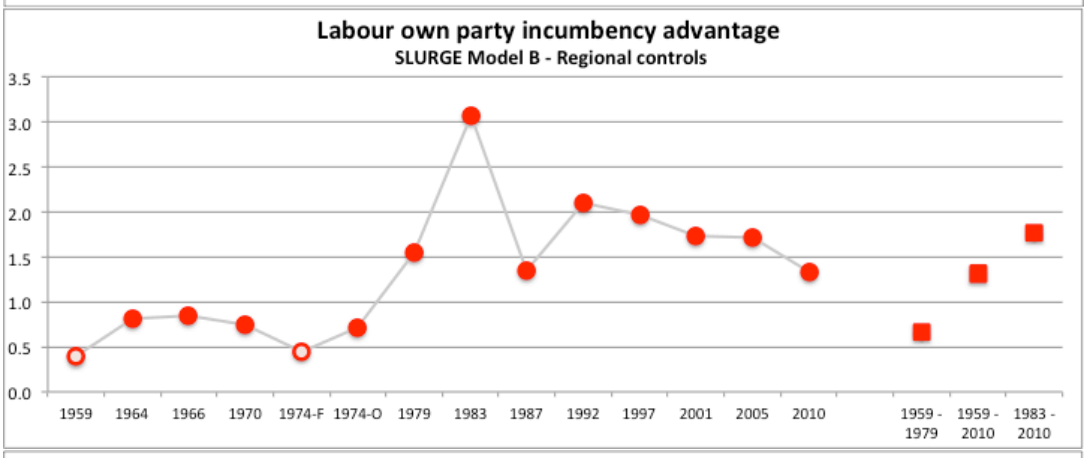


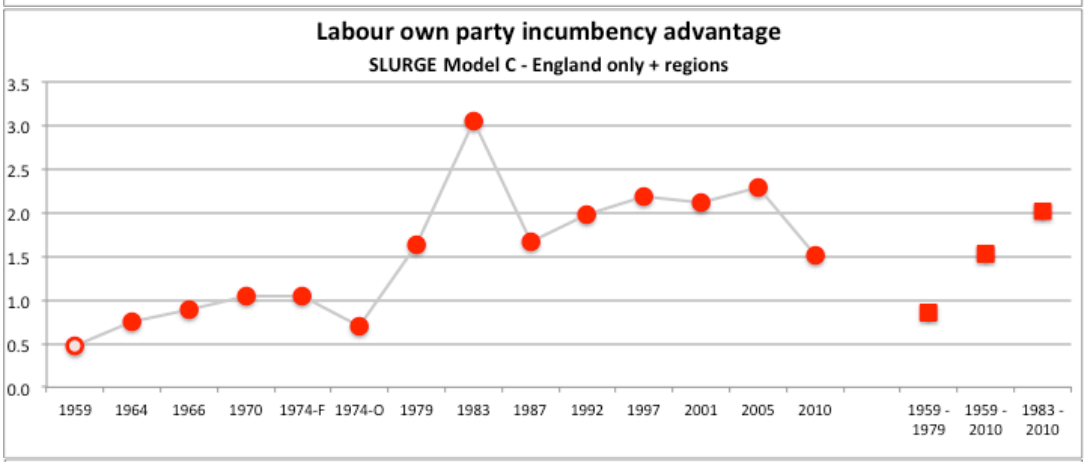


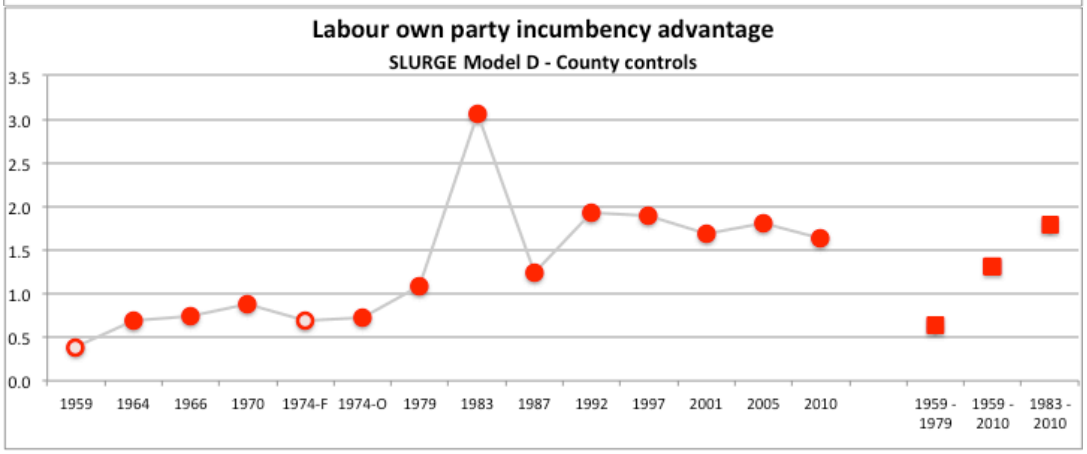


Visualizations of Labour own party incumbency advantage (slurge)

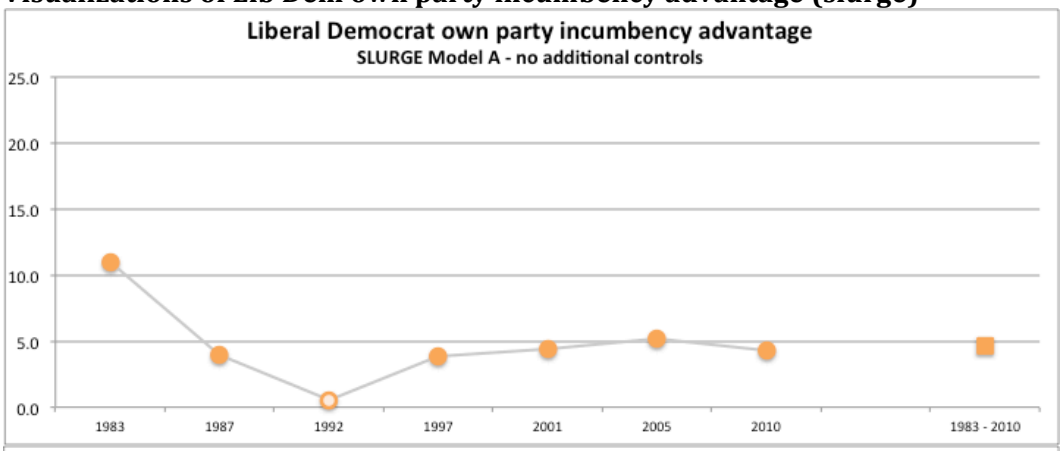


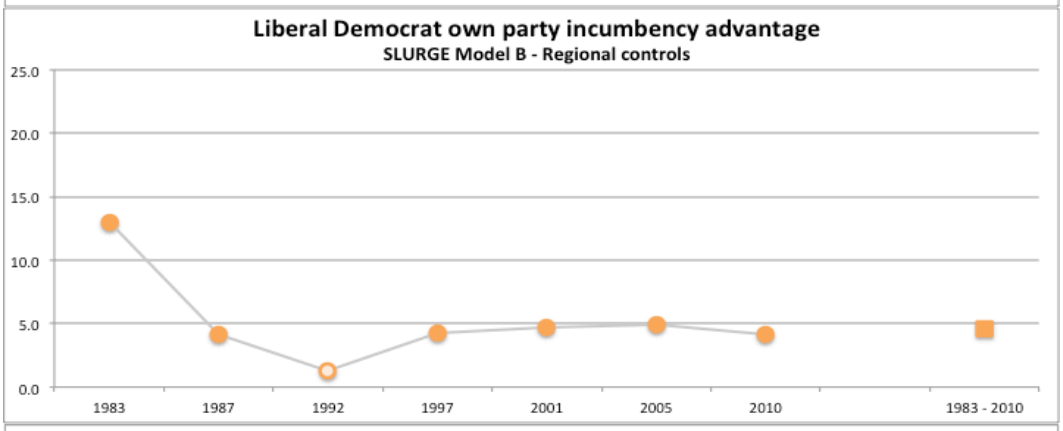


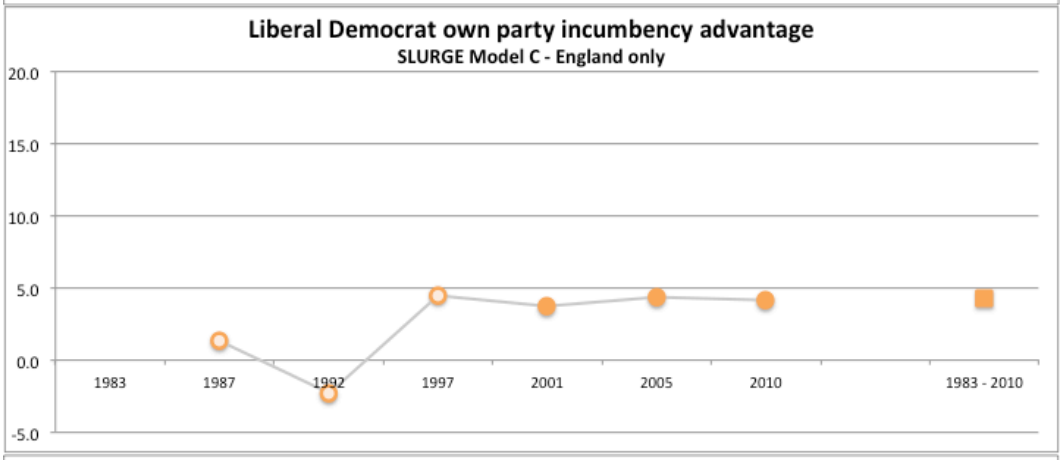


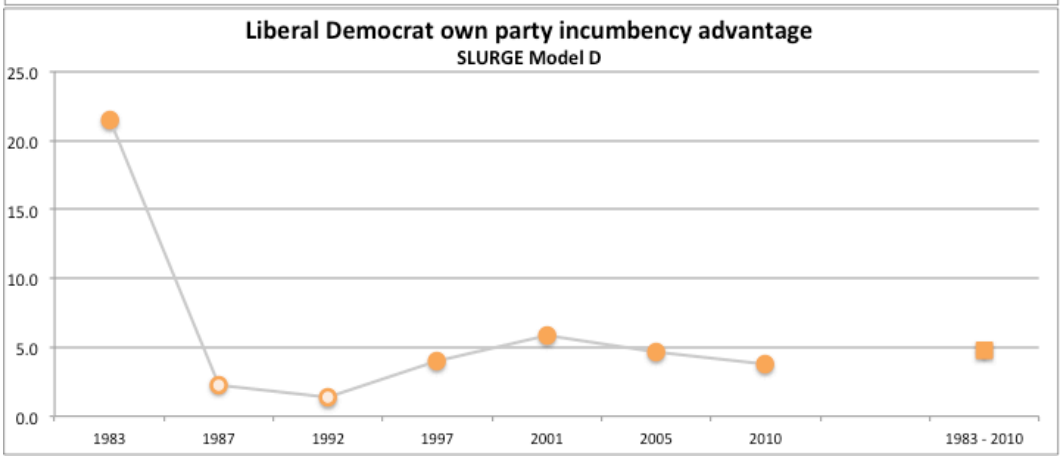


Visualizations of Lib Dem own party incumbency advantage (slurge)









6.4 GKI & Slurge models in Scotland & Wales

The results of the four party regressions for Scotland and Wales are presented in tables 6.4 & 6.5 and the visualizations for own party incumbency below. As discussed in the previous chapter, the smaller number of cases has meant is has been necessary to run the regressions over a series of elections, 1970 – 2010 and 1983 – 2010. The visualizations show the estimates for own party incumbency for Model A and Model D for each of the parties from 1983 – 2010 for both GKI and Slurge. The circles represent the GKI estimates whilst the squares represent slurge. Hollow squares and circles represent estimates, which are not significant at, at least the 5% level of confidence.

The immediate observation from the visualizations is the fact the Lib Dems and Nationalists have so much of a larger incumbency advantage than the two major parties. For the Conservatives, there is very little to say at all since all of the estimates are statistically insignificant, including those for 1970 - 2010 period, not shown in the visualization below. For Labour there is a difference between the two nations, with a much larger incumbency advantage found in Wales than in Scotland. Using the GKI method, none of the Labour incumbency estimates are significant in Scotland, whilst the slurge estimates find an own party incumbency advantage worth around 0.6% for the 1970 – 2010 period and 0.8% for the shorter 1983 – 2010 period. Meanwhile, in Wales all the estimates of the Labour incumbency are significant with a range of 1.6 to 2.1%, not dissimilar to the Britain wide estimates.

Liberal Democrat incumbency advantage estimates are mixed. In Scotland, the GKI estimates come in just over 12.9% whilst the slurge estimates come in at 6.8%, both higher than the estimates for GB wide estimates for each model. The Scottish contingent of Liberal Democrats made up between a third and half of incumbents prior to the sweep of new MPs in 1997. The data suggests that not only did the Liberal Democrats do better in Scotland than the national average in terms of getting MPs elected, but also had a stronger incumbency assisting the party to hold onto their members. In Wales, Liberal Democrat incumbency advantage underperformed. The GKI estimates are insignificant whilst the slurge estimates of 3.8 and 4.2% fall below the national average. There was a small n though with the party never winning more than three seats in Wales during the period. Despite the oft quoted Liberal advantage in the Celtic fringe, the party had not won more than three seats in Wales since 1950, when five of the nine MPs in the Liberal contingent came from the Principality.

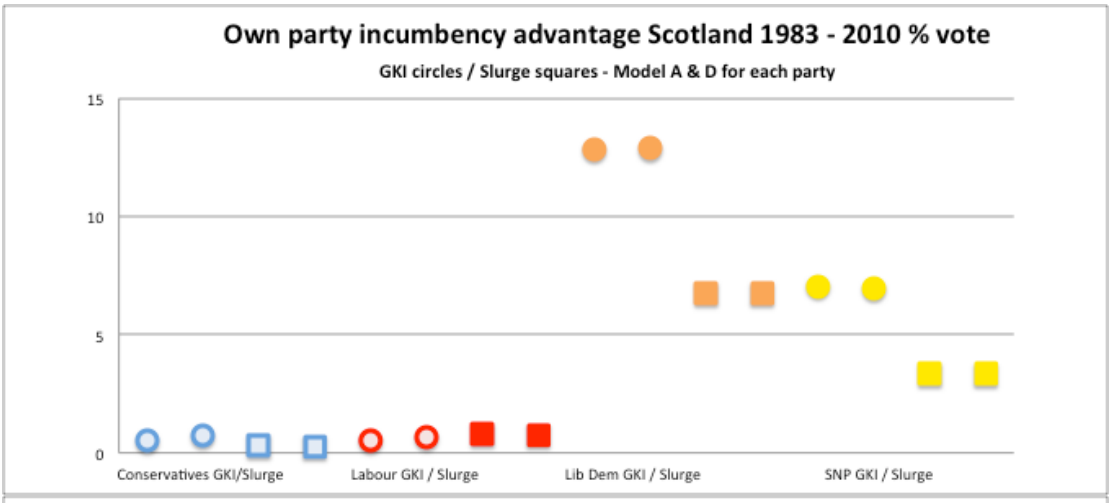
The visualizations below show the estimates for the 1983 – 2010 period for the SNP & Plaid, but for both parties it is worth looking at the additional regressions for the longer period in addition, that of 1974 – 2010.[94] All the own party coefficients for both SNP & Plaid are significant in all the various models and periods despite relatively small "n"s, especially in the case of Plaid.

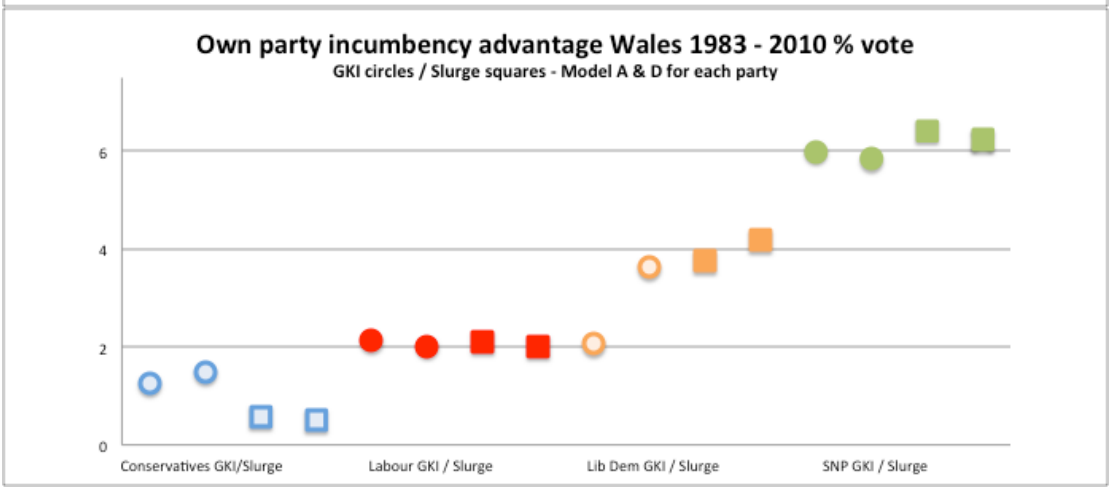
The two different methods, GKI and slurge, give rather different results for the values of the SNP incumbency, rather as they do for the Liberal Democrats. The GKI models estimate the SNP incumbency coefficients to have been between 7.2

and 7.5% for the longer 1974 – 2010 series and 7% for the shorter 1983 – 2010 series, in a similar order to the incumbency advantage possessed by the Lib Dems, GB wide. The slurge numbers show a different picture, with incumbency worth 2.3% for the 1974 – 2010 series and 3.3% for the 1983 – 2010 series. Whilst this is stronger than the two major parties enjoyed nationwide, it is considerably weaker than the slurge estimates gave for the Liberal Democrats. Secondly, the fact the 1974 – 2010 is so much lower than the shorter period suggests that the incumbency value for the first part of the period was very low indeed, perhaps zero. The fact that a very bad election in 1979, in which they lost nine seats, coincided with the fact that seven of their 11 MPs were first term incumbents, may have been to blame for this.

The range of estimates for Plaid Cymru is much tighter, but the party clearly enjoyed an impressive incumbency advantage over the period. The GKI estimates for the full 1974 - 2010 series show an incumbency of 6.1 to 6.3%, whilst the party enjoyed a 5.8 to 6% advantage over the later 1983 - 2010 sub period. For slurge the 1974 – 2010 estimate gives an advantage of 4.8%, whilst the 1983 – 2010 period has 6.2 to 6.4%. The results therefore suggest Plaid enjoys a similar, if slightly smaller, incumbency effect as to the one enjoyed by the Lib Dems.

Visualizations of the own party incumbency advantage in Scotland & Wales





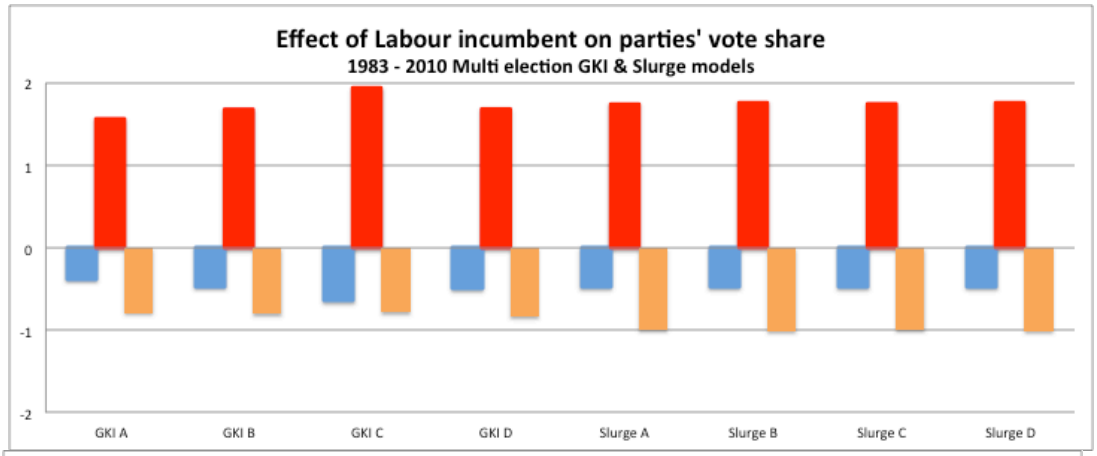
6.5 Cross-tabs - Effect of incumbents on the vote shares of the other parties

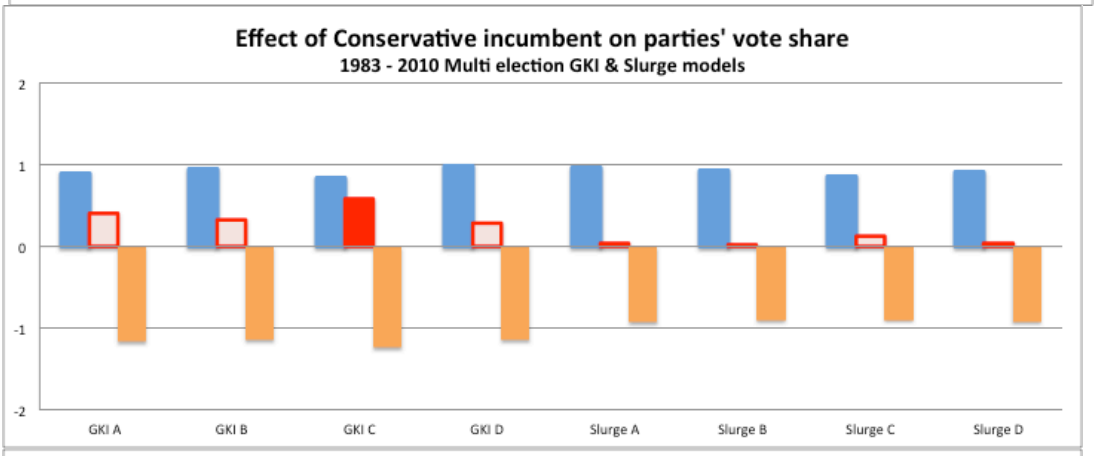
The introductory section of this chapter explains how to read the cross tabs in the various tables produced by the regressions in tables 6.1 - 6.4. Nonetheless, as in previous sections, it is useful to use a visualization to explore the data and the charts below do this for multi election regressions. The four charts show the effects on the vote share of the parties from having a Labour, Conservative, Lib Dem and Nationalist incumbent on the vote share of their own party and the vote share of the other parties.[95] The first visualization measures features Labour incumbency using the GKI method on the left and slurge on the right, with all four models A-D. The red bars show the increase in the Labour vote from the incumbency effect, whilst the Blue and Orange bars show the decline in the Conservative and Lib Dem support from the effect of the Labour incumbent. The fact that the bars are solid shows that they are all statistically significant at a minimum 5% level of confidence. Insignificant coefficients are left unfilled, e.g. the hollow red bars in the Conservative chart.

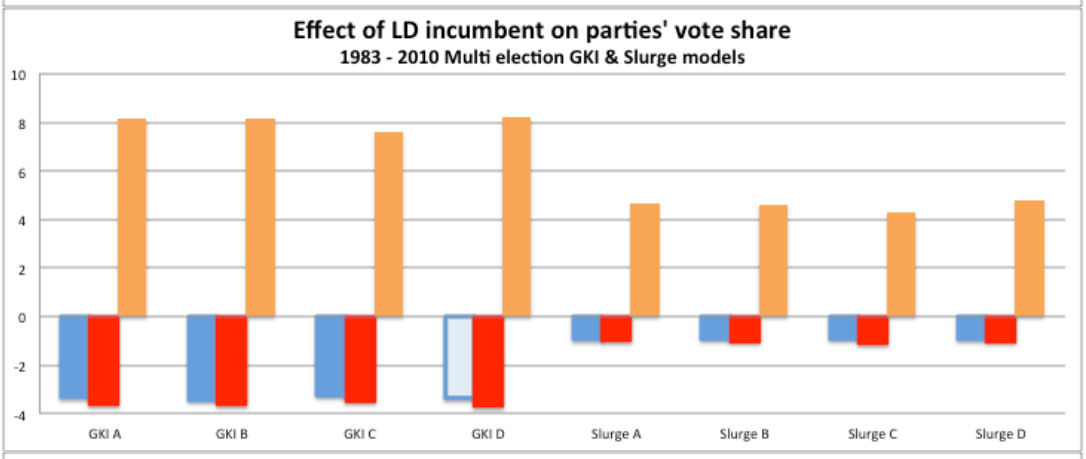
The Labour results[96] lead to a pretty straightforward conclusion, that the Labour incumbency effect comes from squeezing both the Conservative and Lib Dem opposition. The Labour share of the vote rises between 1.6 to 1.9%, whilst the Conservative vote falls 0.4 to 0.6% and the Lib Dem vote hare falls 0.8 to 1%. One could assume therefore that around two-thirds of the Labour incumbency comes from would be Lib Dem voters and about a third from Conservative minded voters.

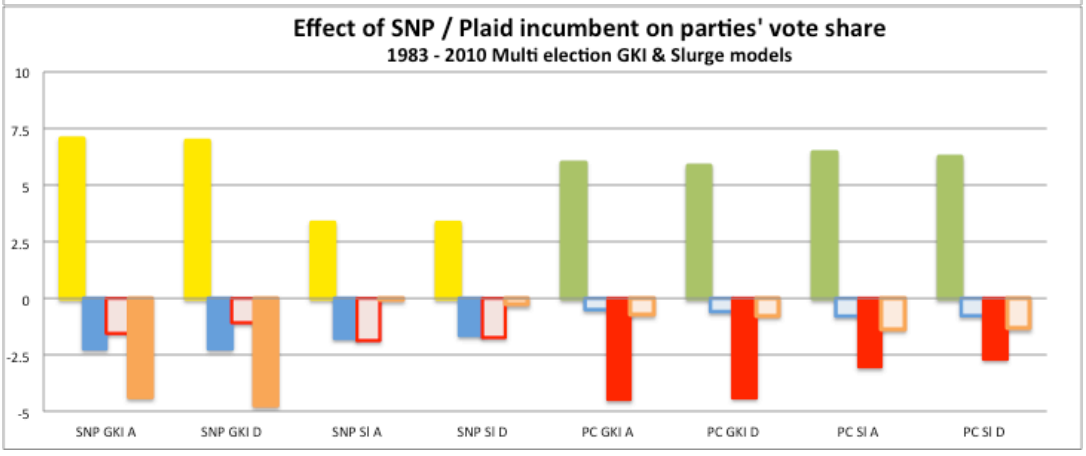
The Conservative results raise some questions. For the GKI methodology, the Lib Dem declines more in the presence of the Conservative incumbent, than the size of the Conservative party's own party advantage, -1.0 to -1.2%, versus +0.8% to 1% respectively. Meanwhile, all four Labour coefficients show an increase in that party's vote, one significantly, an increase of 0.6%. The data implies that the presence of a Conservative incumbent depresses the Liberal Democrat vote with most of it going to the Conservatives, but with some going to Labour. Given the model controls for which party held the seat in election t-1, the implication of this result is that sitting MPs potentially face additional tactical voting over and above that in Conservative seats without an incumbent restanding. The slurge estimates show the change in the Labour vote very close to zero, and in any case insignificant, whilst the Liberal Democrat vote falls as much as the Conservative vote rises, approximately 1%. At the very least, the results suggest that Conservative MPs gain their incumbency advantage from the Liberals Democrats and not Labour.

Visualization of the cross tabs – incumbency effect on other parties









For the Liberal Democrats, the data suggests that their incumbency advantage comes almost equally from supporters of the two major parties. The GKI model giving them an incumbency advantage of 8% appears to be explained by the Conservative vote share dropping 3.2 to 3.4% whilst Labour's drops 3.5 to 3.7%. There appears to be a missing 1% of the vote, which can be assumed to come from Nationalist or other minor parties. For the slurge estimates the incumbency advantage of 4.3 to 4.6% is accompanied by a 0.9% decline in the Conservative vote, and a 1 to 1.1% decline in the Labour vote. This is slightly under half of the total advantage and suggests a bigger role for the decline in the 'other' total.

For the two nationalist parties there is considerable variation in the cross tabs. Using the GKI method for the SNP leads one to the conclusion that the largest source of the SNP's 7% incumbency advantage is otherwise Lib Dem voters, with the centre-party losing approximately 4.5%-points of their vote. The Conservative vote falls a statistically significant 2.2%, and although the Labour vote also falls, it is not statistically significant. Using the slurge methodology, approximately half the SNP incumbency advantage of 3.3% is explained by a drop in the Conservative vote, which declines between 1.6 and 1.8%. The change in the Labour and Liberal Democrat vote is not significant, although the Labour coefficient appears larger than the Conservative one. For Plaid the GKI method estimates to be the source of their incumbency advantage is coming from otherwise Labour voters, with Labour's vote dropping 4.4 to 4.5% of the 5.8 to 6% Plaid incumbency advantage. For the slurge estimates, Labour's vote declines 2.7 to 3%, slightly less than half of the 6.2 to 6.4% Plaid incumbency advantage. For both methods, and models, there are drops in the Conservative and Lib Dem vote shares, but the coefficients are insignificant.

Cross Tabs at individual elections[97]

With the GKI method, Conservative incumbents have no statistically significant impact on the Labour vote at the any of the seven elections in the period, indeed in any of the four models, the coefficients are of both signs. Using the slurge methodology, only one case of 28, model D in 2001 was significant with a decline of 1% in the Labour vote against the Conservative incumbency effects. All in all, there is very little evidence of a Conservative incumbent being able to squeeze the Labour vote, or that the own party incumbency advantage comes from Labour minded voters. With the GKI method, the regressions find the presence of a Conservative incumbent is significant and negative on the Lib Dem share of the vote in three elections, 1987 – 1997 and indeed for all four of the models with a range of values from -1 to -1.7%. The slurge method estimates show 22of the 28 estimates negative and significant with the Liberal Democrat vote falling between 0.8 and 1.6% against Conservative incumbency effects.[98] There also appears to be an element of a trend with the highest values at the start of the period 1983 and 1987 and the smallest at the end.

Labour's results using the GKI methodology show very limited evidence of any of their incumbency advantage coming from Conservative voters, with the four

models only agreeing that there was a decline in the Conservative vote in the presence of a Labour incumbent at the 1997 election, an additional decline of 1.3 to 1.8% over what was likely already to have been a pretty abysmal performance. Model D finds a significant decline in the Conservative vote at the 1983 election of 1% in the presence of a Labour incumbent. The slurge methodology produces similar results with all four models finding a significant fall in the Conservative vote in 1997 against slurge effects with one finding evidence of significance at the 1992 election. Against the Liberal Democrats, the results are patchier than the Conservative results, the Lib Dem vote declines significantly in 10 of the 28 estimates using GKI and 22 of the 28 using slurge methodology. There is no obvious trend other than the 1983 slurge estimates being a comparatively large decline of 2.2 to 2.7% in the Lib Dem vote, against a typical decline of 1.0 to 1.5% otherwise.

The multi election regressions showed the Liberal Democrat incumbency effects working against both parties roughly equally. Looking at the individual elections, in terms of finding significance, there is more evidence that Lib Dem incumbency negatively affected the Conservatives in more elections than it affected Labour. Looking at the four models for each election over the series, Conservative vote was negatively affected in 17 of the 28 cases using GKI and 19 of the 27[99] using slurge. Labour's vote is negatively affected in 12 of the 28 cases using GKI and five using slurge. In a further case in the slurge model the Labour vote rose in response to Lib Dem incumbency effects. There does not appear to be any pattern to the results such as Labour being differentially affected in elections in which they were weak or strong, or in the direction that the swing was going between the three parties.

6.6 Double incumbency

Table 6.6 shows multi election estimates for the value of the first time surge in seats where the incumbent restanding at election t, had defeated a sitting incumbent of a different party at election t-1. Conservative double incumbency is worth 2.2 to 2.3% for the 1959 – 2010 and 2.5 to 2.6% for the 1983 – 2010 period, the coefficients all significant and very similar amongst the four models. The value of this double incumbency compares very favourably to the highest slurge values of incumbency found in section 6.3, that of 0.7% for the full period and 1% for the 1983 – 2010 period. Labour's double incumbency bonus pretty much identical to the straight slurge estimates of incumbency. The 1959 – 2010 sees a range of 1.3 to 1.7% and 1983 – 2010 a range of 1.7 to 2%, versus standard slurge estimates of 1.3 to 1.5% and 1.8 to 2%. Liberal Democrat double incumbency coefficients showed a lower double incumbency advantage than the straight slurge model, with a range of 4 to 4.4% versus 4.3 to 4.8%. Regressions have been run to check the difference between all first term incumbents and double incumbents, in the case of the Conservatives the coefficients were positive and significant as would be expected from the results described above, whilst the difference between Labour and Liberal Democrat first and double incumbents was not significant.

There may be an intuitive explanation for the difference here between the Conservatives and Labour. The vast majority of major party double incumbents come at the expense of the other major party and so when the double incumbent first faces re-election, they benefit from the withdrawal of the other party's incumbency as well as building up their own. Labour double incumbents see the Conservative former incumbent's bonus roll off the Tory vote share, however, since as the cross tabs in part 6.5 show, a Conservative MP's incumbency advantage does not appear to come from Labour minded voters. Therefore the withdrawal of the Conservative advantage does not add to the Labour vote. However, given a Labour incumbent does appear to gain votes from Conservative minded voters, when the Labour incumbency effect rolls off as a Tory double incumbent restands for the first time, this double incumbent may find an additional supply of extra votes to supplement to his total.

Additional evidence for this comes from the fact that the cross tabs show that in cases of a Conservative double incumbent, the Labour vote falls almost exactly the same amount as the Conservative total rises, very different to the standard slurge regressions where there is no meaningful change in the Labour vote. The original Labour incumbency was likely to have been worth more than the other way around and so Labour has more to lose the election after they lose a seat to the Conservatives. Unsurprisingly, therefore, in cases of Labour double incumbency the Conservative vote falls less, only half to two thirds of the amount the Labour vote rises. The weak Lib Dem results may due to the fact that prior to 1997, the majority of their seat pickups came from by election wins and not from straight fights at general elections. Since by elections have been removed from these regressions the number of cases is low and the results may be somewhat distorted.

6.7 Differential incumbency by region

Table 6.7 <below> shows the results of multi election regressions using the slurge method, model A, region by region. The results show much more variation between regions, than nationally from election to election.

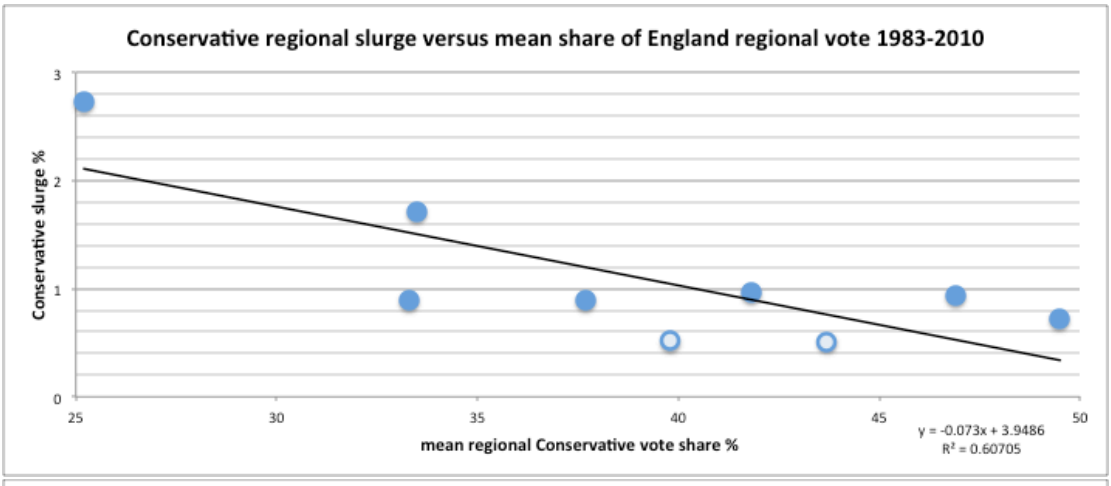
Although the Conservative incumbency coefficient is positive all regions, the estimates are only statistically significant in seven of the 11. The slurge estimates in Scotland, Wales, the South West, and the West Midlands are all insignificant. In the remaining seven regions, five have slurge values of 0.9 to 1%, close to the national estimate of 0.97%. However, in two weaker Conservative areas, the North West and the North East, the slurge estimates show a much larger advantage of 1.7% and 2.7% respectively. The large Conservative advantage in the North East comes from the Liberal Democrats whose vote drops 3% in response to slurge effects. The Liberal Democrats are significantly negatively affected by Conservative incumbents in six of the 11 regions, whilst only in London is there is a drop in the Labour vote in the presence of a Conservative incumbent. In most of the regions the Labour coefficient has the wrong sign with the Labour vote benefiting from an incumbent Conservative,[100] and in the East Midlands it is positive and significant at 0.9% of the vote.

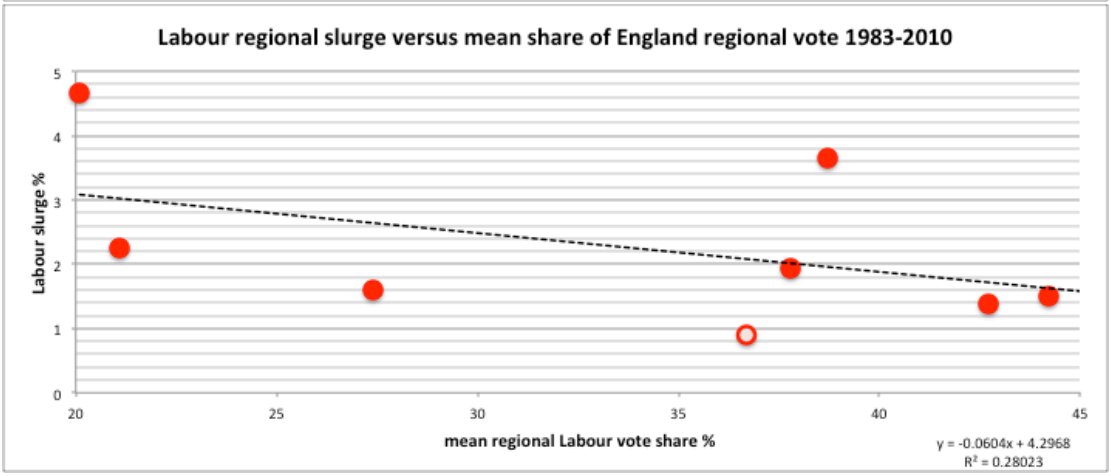
Labour's slurge coefficients are positive in all regions, although insignificant in the East Midlands, where ironically, they benefit (significantly) from Conservative incumbents instead. In the rest of the regions, the slurge estimates range from 0.8% in Scotland, 1.4 to 1.6% in the North West, North East, Yorkshire and East Anglia, 1.9 to 2.2% in the West Midlands, Wales and the South East, 3.7% in London and 4.7% in the South West. Labour incumbency had a significant negative impact in the Conservative vote share in five of the 11 regions and in 7 of the 11 regions for Liberal Democrats.

The Liberal Democrat incumbency coefficient is significant in eight of the ten regions, with the results for the West Midlands and the North West insignificant. In six regions the Lib Dem incumbency advantage is similar to the national estimates ranging from 3.8 to 6.8%, whilst in the East Midlands and East Anglia the advantage jumps to over 9.5%. The presence of Lib Dem incumbents appears to have wider negative effect on the Conservative than Labour, with the Tories being significantly negatively affected by Lib Dem incumbents in six regions versus three for Labour.[101]

One thing that immediately comes to mind from the results, is that for the two major parties the incumbency advantage appears to be strongest in regions in which they are traditionally at their weakest with the Conservative slurge estimated at the 2.7% in the North East of England, whist Labour's best slurge result, 4.7%, was in the South West, a region in which they failed to make much headway during the 1983 – 2010 period.

The visualizations show the results of the slurge models in the nine English regions with the major party's mean 1983 – 2010 vote plotted against the own party slurge coefficient. For the Conservatives the blue dot furthest to the left hand side represents the North East, where the mean share was barely 25%, but the slurge coefficient was 2.7%. The hollow dots represent slurge estimates, which are not statistically significant. The trend line represents the bivariate regression running the slurge coefficient as the dependent variable against the party's mean vote share as the independent variable. The Conservative slurge coefficient is significantly negatively correlated [$p = 0.012$] with the party's vote share. Labour's vote share is also negatively correlated with the slurge estimates, but this is not significant. Additional regressions were done with all 11 GB regions, and whilst the coefficients remain negative, there is no significance. It is tempting to ask the question if the incumbency effect could be stronger in areas where having an MP of the said party is more of a rarity, at least within England.


Conservative regional slurge versus mean share of England regional vote 1983-2010
Conservative slurge %
mean regional Conservative vote share %
y = -0.073x + 3.9486
R² = 0.60705


Labour regional slurge versus mean share of England regional vote 1983-2010
Labour slurge %
mean regional Labour vote share %
y = -0.0604x + 4.2968
R² = 0.28023

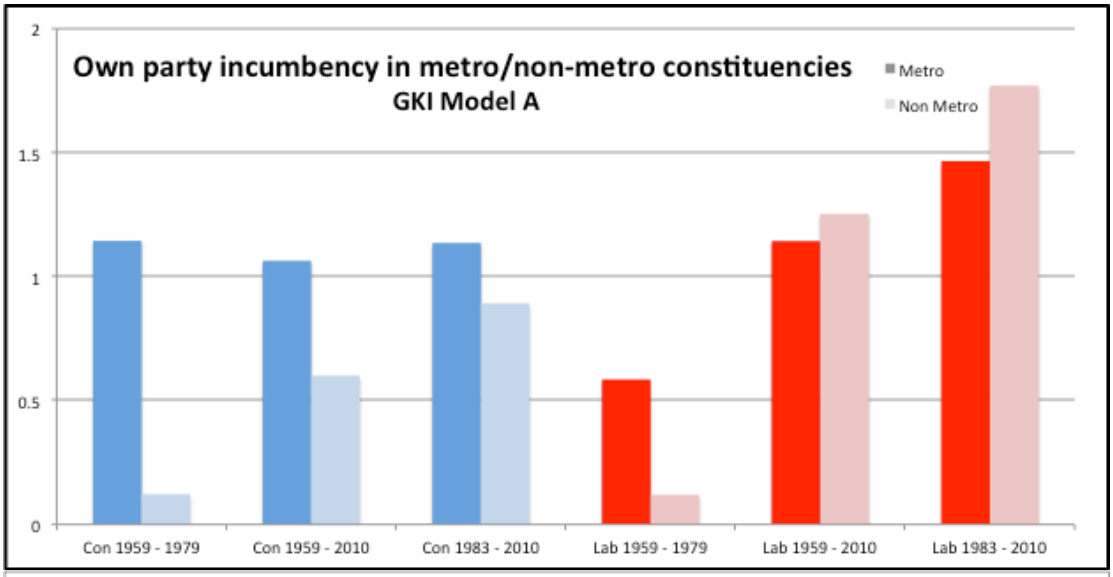
6.8 Differential incumbency effects in metropolitan and rural areas

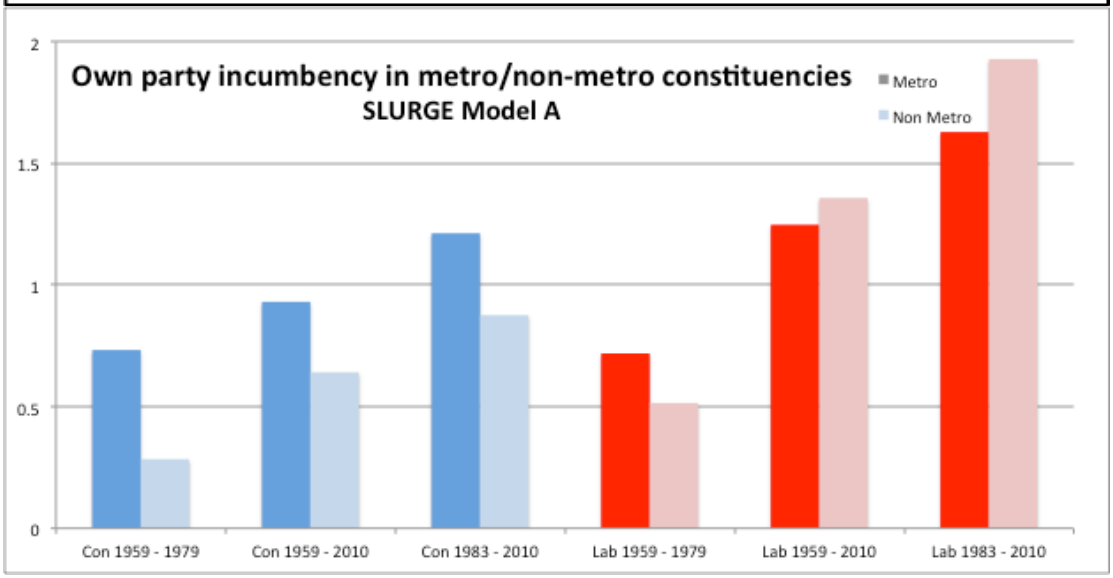
Table 6.8 <below> and the visualizations below show the results of the regressions splitting the multi elections by splitting the metropolitan counties and London,[102] from the shire counties to test if there is any difference in incumbency advantage. Model A has been used for both the GKI & slurge methods of measuring incumbency advantage.

The results for the Conservatives appear at first to be somewhat counterintuitive in that there is a much larger incumbency advantage in metropolitan counties, their generally weaker area, to the shire counties, their areas of strength. The GKI results for metropolitan areas has a near constant 1 to 1.1% incumbency advantage for the three time periods, 1959-79, 1959-2010 and 1983-2010, whilst incumbency in the non-metropolitan areas was insignificant in the first period, and lower at 0.6 and 0.9% in the subsequent two periods tested. Slurge results for the Conservatives also show them doing better in metropolitan areas in all three elections. These results show an increasing incumbency advantage over time in both sets of seats, but with the incumbency advantage in metropolitan counties around 0.5% higher than in non-metro areas.

The results for Labour are more mixed, with the party doing better in metropolitan areas in the earlier 1959 – 1979 period under both methodologies, but with the reverse being true for the later period. The GKI estimate for the earlier period show incumbency higher in metro areas 0.6% versus an insignificant 0.1%, but smaller, 1.5% to 1.8% in the second period. Likewise, under the slurge method, incumbency in metropolitan areas is higher 0.7% to 0.5%, but trails 1.6 to 1.9% in the 1983 – 2010 elections. For the Liberal Democrats, the results in table 6.8 show incumbency advantage was larger in non-metropolitan areas during the 1983 – 2010 election under both methodologies. The GKI incumbency advantages are estimated at 9.3% in non-metropolitan areas to 6.1% in metropolitan areas, and the results were 5.1% to 3.7% respectively using the slurge methodology, all significant.

The results of these do not present any obvious conclusion for the parties collectively. Conservatives were always the minority party in metropolitan counties,[103] at the start of the series in 1955 they won 136 of 318 seats, when they won a nationwide majority of 60, at the 1966 election 83, and in 1997 just 21 of 277. One could question if the fact that Conservative seats were more of a rarity in metropolitan areas made having a Conservative MP in an otherwise sea of red, made voters more inclined to pay attention to their MP. Labour was the minority party in non-metropolitan areas, even in its year of triumph in 1997 when it won 177 of 364, having started by winning 89 in 1955 and 1959 and dropping as low as 52 in 1983. However, the fact that the only in the 1959 – 79 series was Labour's incumbency advantage larger in non-metro areas means that the conjecture that it might be a rarity factor assisting the minority party in an area lacks sufficient evidence.


Own party incumbency in metro/non-metro constituencies
GKI Model A
Metro
Non Metro
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
Con 1959 - 1979
Con 1959 - 2010
Con 1983 - 2010
Lab 1959 - 1979
Lab 1959 - 2010
Lab 1983 - 2010


Own party incumbency in metro/non-metro constituencies
SLURGE Model A
Metro
Non Metro
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
Con 1959 - 1979
Con 1959 - 2010
Con 1983 - 2010
Lab 1959 - 1979
Lab 1959 - 2010
Lab 1983 - 2010

6.9 The Effect of Incumbency on Actual Seats in elections from 1959 – 2010

Tables 6.9a-d <below> show the results of an analysis as to the effects of incumbency on actual seats. The two different methods can be used to look at different things. The GKI model can be used to show the difference at each election in terms of seats if there were no incumbency effect, so the difference between the observed value of incumbency and a value of incumbency of zero. Tables 6.9a-b do this for the 1959-79 results and 1983 – 2010 results respectively, and since the Liberal results are not available before the1983 election by election, the first set only looks at the effect on Conservative and Labour seats, whilst the latter period includes the results for all three parties.

The slurge results could also be used to the same effect by taking the slurge value as the value of incumbency and adjusting the seats accordingly, however, instead of replicating this analysis, the slurge results have been used to estimate the net effects of retirement slumps and first term surges to the parties at each election. Therefore, instead of setting the value of incumbency to zero, the analysis sets the value for retirement (-1) and first term surge (+1) to zero, and these are shown in tables 6.9c-d. Therefore the fact that the results in the two sets of results are very different is because they are looking at two different effects.

GKI and the results adjusted to set incumbency to zero

The Gelman-King results are applied to produce estimates of the effects that the incumbency advantage might have had on each of the general elections in the series using the following method. The coefficients in Table 6.2a show the GKI value of own party of incumbency and the effects on the other parties of having an incumbent MP of the first party. For the 1959 election having a Labour incumbent is estimated to have increased the Labour vote by 0.516 and the Conservative vote by 0.878%. Setting this to zero would imply that any Labour seat with an incumbent restanding with a majority of under 1.394% would have been in the Conservative column, should the value of incumbency been zero. The presence of a Conservative incumbent increased the party's own vote by just 0.087% and weighed on Labour's by 0.054%, therefore only an extremely narrowly held Conservative seat with a majority of 0.141% or less would have been Labour without incumbency. Table 6.9a for 1959 shows, with that there were nine seats that Labour held with majorities less than 1.394% over the Conservatives, with incumbents restanding, that would have been in the Conservative column had the value of incumbency been zero. The figures are net of both parties, but in this case, and unsurprisingly, there were no Conservative seats that would have gone to Labour without incumbency.

To see an example of a three party case, at the 2010 election, Liberal Democrat incumbents are estimated to have had an own party incumbency advantage of 7.720%, whilst Conservatives challenging them faced a 5.460% penalty and Labour a 0.030% penalty. This suggested that the seventeen re-elected Liberal Democrats incumbents who won with a majority of less than 13.180% over the Conservatives and the two re-elected Liberal Democrat MPs elected with a

majority smaller than 7.750% over Labour owe their survival to these incumbency effects.

Looking at the Conservative and Labour results, the parties only saved seats in which in which the two party tide was moving against them. Labour was a net beneficiary of incumbency in 1959, 1970, 1979, 1983, 2001, 2005 and 2010, every election in the series in which the swing was towards the Conservatives. The Conservatives saved seats in 1964, the two 1974 elections and 1997 when the swing was heading towards Labour, but not in 1966, 1987, 1992 when it was also heading in Labour's direction. There is a further asymmetry in that Labour has done better from incumbency on average over the entire series. In the first seven elections, comparing Labour and Conservative seats only, Labour saved a net seven against the Conservatives losing seven, an average of one in Labour's favour at every election. In the second series, the net total for the series is -74 for the Conservatives an average of over -10 seats per election, and Labour +8 for the series, one per election.

The Liberal Democrats are clearly the big winners from incumbency. The Liberal total is 66, suggesting that on average, almost 10 of seats relied on the incumbency factor for survival at each election. Incumbency effects at the 2010 election saved over 20% of the Parliamentary Party; the proportion was nearly half at the 1983 election. Overall, the presence of incumbency has had the effect of redistributing seats from the Conservatives to the Liberal Democrats. This is partly due to the fact that the difference in incumbency advantages is most extreme between these two parties and also because the electoral geography means that the Liberal Democrats are much more likely to pick up seats in Conservative areas than in Labour areas (Johnston, 2001). The scale of the Conservatives' losses to the Liberal Democrats at the 1997 election allowed a wedge of MPs, supported by their incumbency advantage to survive the Conservative recovery at the 2010 election, and deny the Conservatives a majority.

The size of the Conservative versus Labour effect in terms of seats appears not to have changed from the first period to the second period. On the face of it, this appears surprising because one would have expected the much larger incumbency coefficients to have increased the number of seats affected by incumbency. An explanation for why smaller incumbency advantages in the earlier period have changed the result in as many seats as in the later period, is that there were more marginal seats in this earlier period than there were in the second period. As has been pointed out, the fact that the South has got more Conservative and the North more Labour over the second half of the twentieth century has progressively reduced the numbers of seats won by small margins (Norris and Crewe, 1994) (Curtice et al., 2010). Therefore the decline in marginal seats has been offset by the increase in the potency of the incumbency effect, meaning that the overall effect on actual seats has been left unchanged.

Looking at the incumbency factor's effect on individual elections, there are some intriguing *what ifs* regarding four close elections, 1964, the two 1974 elections and 2010. It is this final 2010 election, which stands out as the one that was

potentially changed the most. Had there been no incumbency advantage, the Conservatives in 2010 might have won a net extra thirteen seats, giving them at a total of 320. Given that the five Sinn Fein MPs did not claim their seats, this would have left David Cameron extremely close to an overall majority, which would have allowed him to form a minority Government or had a pact with the Unionists in Northern Ireland if he had chosen not to attempt to make a deal with the Liberal Democrats. At the very least it would have given him more leverage.

In 1964, had there been no incumbency advantage saving four Conservative incumbents and instead, Labour had had a majority of 12 instead of four, could they have attempted some more reforming legislation right away rather than waiting for a second election in 1966? They almost certainly wouldn't have been defeated on steel renationalization as they were in 1965. Had Labour had extra seats after the February 1974 Heath would not have been able to consider a deal with the Liberals and the new Labour Government might have been able to do more in its minority period in office. Labour winning a majority of 17 instead of three in October 1974 would have given enough to survive as a majority Government until almost the end of the Parliament, the Government would have lost far fewer votes on legislation such as Scottish Devolution,[104] it is unlikely that there would have been any need for a Lib-Lab pact, nor likely that the Government would have been tipped out of office as the result of a no confidence motion in March 1979.

Slurge model to determine the effects of retirements and first term surges on seats

Table 6.9c and 6.9d show that the effects of a change in the status of incumbency i.e. a first time surge or retirement penalty have had much more of a limited impact in the number of seats won. The largest effect at any single election was the eight seat net loss by the Conservatives to the other parties, and there was no net effect in five of the 14 elections, 1964,1966, both 1974 elections and 1997. In terms of effects on seats, one would expect retirement penalty to harm the party losing the election and thus on the defensive, but that the first term bonus would work in the other direction, helping them to retain seats against the tide.

In the first seven elections there were just eight cases, (the 1964 results cancelled one another out), in which seats are estimated as likely to have panned out differently than they would have done had there been no retirement or first term surge. There was only one case in which a retirement, Conservative in Ealing North in 1964, appears to have made a difference, with the seat going to Labour, albeit quite an important one given the new Labour Government's final majority ended up being four instead of two. The other seven cases were MPs who saved seats due to a first term surge, in all cases against a swing to the other major party. The 1979 election results show the Conservatives failing to win back two marginal seats they had lost in October 1974 due to the first term bounces of the new incumbent MPs.[105] Given that seven of the eight cases were first time bonuses, it is unsurprising that the net effect has benefitted the *defending* party in all three elections, Labour in 1959,70 and 1979.

In the second period, with three party estimates, there was a greater mix with 13 cases where a retirement cost an incumbent party the seat, and another 16 cases in which a first term incumbent's first term surge is estimated to have allowed the sitting party to hold onto the seat. All 13 retirements were to the benefit of the Conservatives, six from the Liberal Democrats and seven from Labour, the fact that Labour and Liberal Democrats had larger incumbency advantages than the Conservatives makes this unsurprising. Similarly, only three Conservative first term incumbents saved their seats, against six Lib Dems and seven Labour first timers.

Looking at specific elections, the Conservatives only benefitted from a first time bounce at the 1987 election when there were a large number of first term incumbents re-standing for the first time, many in seats they picked up from Labour in 1983, and against a modest national swing of 1.7% from the Conservatives to Labour. Additionally the Conservatives picked off two retirements, one each from Labour[106] and the Liberals. However, it made no material difference to the result of the election, just increasing the Conservative majority from a landslide of 92 to a three-figure landslide of 102.

The 2001 results help answer the question as to why a small swing back to the Conservatives, 1.7%, failed to yield net gains.[107] The estimates suggest that the Conservatives might have gained four seats from Labour and four from the Liberal Democrats in the absence of this first time effect. This was somewhat reversed at the 2010 election when six retirements allowed the Conservatives to regain seats they would otherwise have failed to pick up, three of the six were Lib Dem seats they had lost in 1997.

6.10 Repeat candidates

Tables 6.10 & 6.10a-d show the results of the regressions adding in additional dummy variables for repeat candidates described in Chapter 5. For the reasons set out in the methodology chapter the multi elections results exclude the elections of Feb 1974 and 1983. Table 6.10 shows the multi election results with repeat candidate effects alongside those of incumbency effects from the same elections in the cycles. The incumbency results on the right hand side will be different to those in the earlier sections since two elections are removed, and the additional dummy variables of repeat candidates are added. For cases in which an incumbent MP faced a repeat candidate of a different party the variables could work against one another for both sets of coefficients.

Looking at the Conservative results, in the full 1959 – 2010 series, there was a considerable difference between the value of incumbency and that of repeat candidacy. Incumbency is positive and significant in all four elections with a value ranging from just under 0.7 to just under 0.9%. The value of repeat candidacy is only significant in models A & B, and worth around 0.3% of the vote. However, for second 1987 – 2010 period there was no statistically significance found between the two sets of estimates for incumbency and repeat candidates in all four models.[108] The range of values for repeat candidates' bonus was 0.9 to 1.2% and 1.1 to 1.3% for incumbency. Taking model C to three decimals the

repeat advantage was actually larger than that of incumbency at 1.160% v 1.081%.

Labour repeat candidate and incumbency advantages were positive and significant for all four models for both the full 1959 – 2010 series of twelve elections and the six election 1987 – 2010 multi election series. Repeat candidacy appears to have been worth just over 0.8% for the full period in the three Great Britain models, lower than the 1.2% estimate for incumbency, but not statistically significantly. There is a wider gap for the England only with incumbency worth a full percentage-point more than repeat candidacy, 1.7 against 0.7%. In the second period, incumbency is statistically significantly higher than repeat candidacy in all four models, 1.5 against 1% for the three GB wide models and 2% to 0.9% in the England only model. Nonetheless repeat candidacy is clearly large enough to be a potentially important consideration for an election in a close seat.

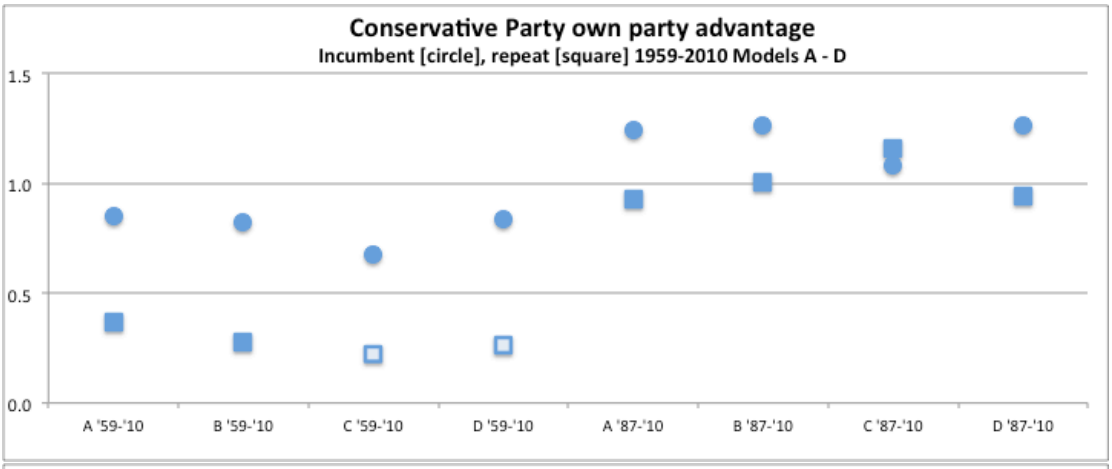
Liberal Democrat repeat candidacy might appear to be something of a disappointment, statistically significant in all four models, but only a fraction of the very large incumbency advantage enjoyed by their MPs. Repeat candidacy is estimated to have been worth 1.4 to 1.5% in all four models for the six elections in the series against 6.6 to 7.1% for incumbency.

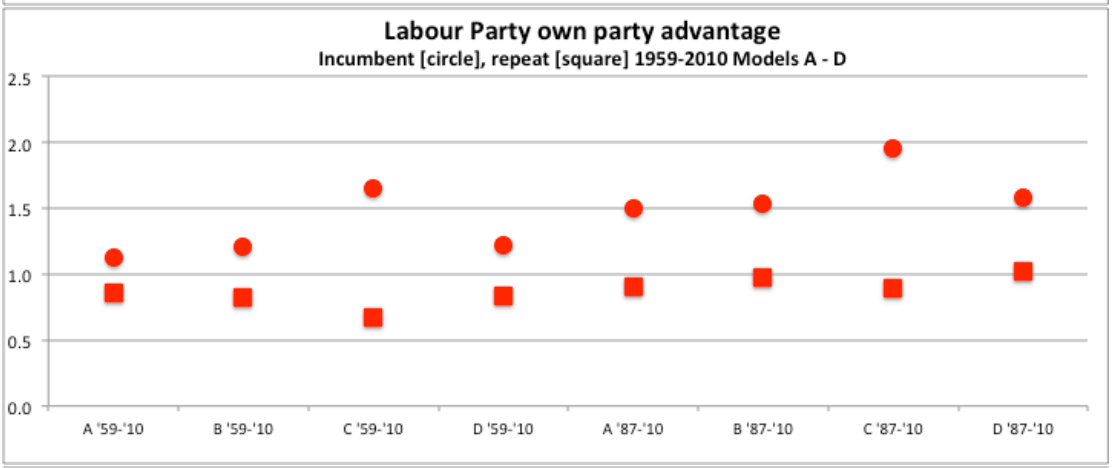
The results for individual elections show a considerably weaker picture for the value of repeat candidacy compared to the value of incumbency. For the Conservatives there are only two elections, 2001 and 2005 at which repeat candidacy is estimated to have been positive and significant by all four models, 2001 and 2005. At these elections repeat candidacy is estimated to have been worth between 1.2 and 2%, very much in line with estimates for the value of incumbency. These two elections had a higher than normal number of repeat candidates, and were when the Conservatives were fighting largely on the offensive, trying to regain the large number of seats they had lost in 1997 to Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Two former Conservative MPs who had been defeated in 1997 were successful in gaining re-election in 2001.[109]

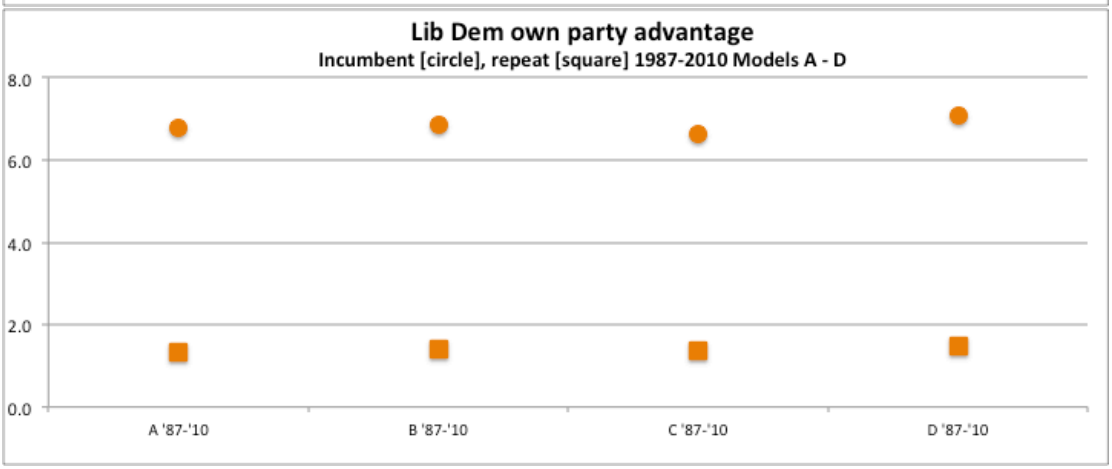
There are two more cases, of one of the models finding significance at an individual election, model A in 1966 and model D in 1992, but these two elections were when the tide was moving towards the Labour party. Finally, three of the models find repeat candidacy was statistically significant and negative at the October 1974 election, again this would have made no difference as the Conservatives were on the defensive in this election as well.[110]

The individual election estimates for Labour show a little more evidence of significance. Four of the twelve elections have repeat candidate estimates which are positive and significant for at least three of the four models, A, B & D, that of 1966, October 1974, 1979 and 2001. For the first three of these elections the repeat candidacy was estimated to be worth 0.6 to 1.7%, but the 2001 election this leapt to 3.7%, far more than the value of incumbency itself. It is possible that this could have been something of a fluke given the relatively small number of repeat candidates, 15, from 56 at the previous election, but given Labour was

defending almost two-thirds of the consistencies in Great Britain, there were far fewer places in which to make a repeat attempt at gaining election. Despite a small national swing to the Conservatives, one repeat candidate succeeded.[111]







The repeat candidacy estimates for the Lib Dems are found to be positive and significant in four of the elections, 1987, 1997, 2001 and 2010, and positive but insignificant in 1992 and 2005.[112] The size of the estimates varies from a range of 0.7 to 1% in 1987, 1.3 to 1.6% in 2001 an 2010, and a high point of 1.8 to 2% in 1997. There does not appear to be any pattern with regard to whether or not the party's vote was rising or falling, their best result coming in 1997 when the their vote fell, whilst in 2005 when their vote share rose 3.7%, the largest rise in

the series, the coefficient was not significant. However, it is likely that the Lib Dem repeat candidate advantage may have had a decisive effect on two seats in 1997 where a repeat candidate defeated a Conservative by under 2% of the vote.[113]

Third time candidates at the 2005 and 2010 elections

The Conservatives had two three-time candidates in 2005 who had fought the seats in the two immediately previous elections. Both were successful in gaining election. At the 2010 election, there were nine such cases who had fought three in a row, eight of whom gained election. All 11 cases were seats which could have been considered as winnable, and had been Conservative prior to 1997, all candidates no doubt attracted to reapply by the hope of gaining the seat from Labour or the Liberal Democrats with one more heave. The fact that ten of the 11 candidates were successful shouldn't be seen as evidence for a special third term success, but says more about where a candidate is prepared to spend over a decade of their life seeking election.

Additional regressions were run on these cases with an additional third time variable. The 2005 pair did over 4% better than other repeat candidates, which was significant at a $p < 0.01$. The 2010 three time candidates did worse than other repeat candidates, although the coefficients were insignificant, indeed if these third time candidates are stripped out of the regressions, the 2010 repeat candidacy variable becomes significant. The fact that the third time repeat candidate coefficient was insignificant suggests that like incumbency, repeat candidate advantage accrues over one term and that there is no additional advantage in a third or subsequent attempt.

Labour had eight third time candidates, three in 2005 and five in 2010, none were successful, but considering Labour was on the defensive and had few expectations of gaining any seats at either election, these should be considered as sacrificial lamb candidates rather than determined office seekers. Additional familiarity made no difference with the third time coefficients all insignificant, some having the wrong sign.

Liberal Democrats had 24 third time candidates in 2005 and 32 in 2010, with a smaller pool of winnable seats, and indeed a smaller pool of candidates, most of these could be considered to be sacrificial lambs.[114] As for Labour and the Conservatives in 2010, there was no additional benefit for a Liberal Democrat attempting a third run in the same constituency.[115]

6.11 Effects of specific 'roll-call' votes on MPs performance

Table 6.11 <below> shows the results of regressions testing if there was any differential performance by MPs who were out of line with their parties on some of the major divisions of the 2001/2005 and 2005/2010 Parliaments. Section 5.8 explained in detail the criteria and purpose for the selection of each of the divisions.

For the Conservatives, the coefficients are uniformly insignificant. For both the B and D models, the coefficients a mix of small positive and negative values, but none of the *p* values are remotely near significance. For example, the Iraq coefficient is +0.479 for model B and -0.681 for model D, but with *p* values of 0.527 and 0.383, which make both statistically insignificantly different from zero, i.e. the null hypothesis that the dummy variable *Iraq War* is insignificant is accepted.

For Labour, things are little better for the individual regressions. None of them are significant at the standard 5% level of significance. However, for the 2005 – 2010 Parliament there were a couple of near misses for the individual regressions, and the coefficients were all positive. For example, on the Lisbon Treaty, the coefficient in model B was 1.6%, suggesting Labour MPs who voted with Conservative Eurosceptics did 1.6% than colleagues who stuck with the Government, but with a *p* of 0.097 this is only statistically significant at the usually unacceptable 10% level of confidence.

The fact that all three votes had positive, yet insignificant coefficients suggested that there might be scope for looking at them collectively as a kind of 'rebel' test. A final regression was run on model B and D with a new binary variable set to 1 for a re-standing incumbent Labour MP who voted for any one of the three minority positions and zero otherwise. MPs who voted for more than one of the above and indeed Frank Field who voted for all three are nonetheless given the value of 1. The results of these regressions in both model B and D are positive and significant at the 1% confidence level. At face value, the size of coefficients of 1.484% and 1.776%, suggests that not only was there some sort of reward for independent voting in the 2005-10 Parliament, but that it was not dissimilar to the value of incumbency advantage in general.

This is an extremely limited look at the effect of voting and ideology amongst MPs, and the results are somewhat contradictory, but it suggests that there may be some scope for further work on macro data.

6.12 Incumbency advantage's relationship with polarization and partisan dealignment

As discussed in section 5.10, the final sets of regressions use the results of earlier regressions to provide an incumbency value for each election, which can used to assess if there is any significant relationship between the value of incumbency and the changes in the political environment, specifically, changes in polarization of the party platforms over the series of elections, and the on-going process of partisan dealignment of the electorate.

Table 6.12 <below> shows the results of the regressions. The top left block of the table shows the regressions for the Conservative GKI model A results. The dependent variable is the incumbency advantage estimated in each election from GKI model A, taken from table 6.2A, as the dependent variable, run against the three models for polarization and partisanship. The first result shows an estimate that incumbency advantage is reduced by an increase in polarization,

but the p value shows the result is insignificant. The sign for the effect of polarization are in the opposite direction in models II and III, but coefficients remain insignificant. Given the values of polarization and partisanship are arbitrary values we are looking for the sign of coefficient and the *p* value only.

Looking at the table as a whole, there is very little evidence of any significant relationship between the size of the incumbency advantage with either partisanship or polarization. None of the estimates for the Conservatives had any significance at the 5% level, there was only one near-miss from 36 estimations at the 10% level. On the Labour side, there were two statistically significant coefficients, both for polarization, but in the opposite direction. Model II against Labour's GKI Model A incumbency results shows polarization to have a negative and significant correlation with incumbency whilst Model I for Labour's slurge B results shows a positive and significant correlation. The results of these are pretty conclusive that there is no reliable relationship. Additional regressions without the date control does show significance for both variables, but as described in section 5.10 this risks erroneously picking up a relationship that really comes from a change over time.

The date/time control variable in the original regressions is positive and significant in 13 of the 72 estimations indicating in these cases, a statistically significant increase in incumbency advantage over time, taking account of changes in partisanship or polarization. There is a negative cross correlation between the date with partisanship and polarization and so to some extent they cancel each other's significance out. However, the time control variable performs much more powerfully than the other two, which suggests that it is the former variable that is driving things. Thus, changes in polarization and partisan alignment may be part of the same change in political behaviour over the 1959 – 2010 period, but they are not the cause and are not even correlated with incumbency once the election date is controlled.

Table 6.1 - MULTI ELECTION GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

		INCUMBENT		
		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM
Model A				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.572**	-0.336	
	LAB VOTE	0.004	0.343	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.693**	-0.265	
	LAB VOTE	0.218	1.142**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.899**	-0.372**	-3.322**
	LAB VOTE	0.404	1.568**	-3.626**
	LD VOTE	-1.170**	-0.789**	8.148**
Model B				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.525*	-0.404	
	LAB VOTE	0.016	0.354	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.712**	-0.378**	
	LAB VOTE	0.178	1.214**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.950**	-0.462**	-3.433**
	LAB VOTE	0.325	1.684**	-3.642**
	LD VOTE	-1.147**	-0.805**	8.144**
Model C				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.398*	-0.511*	
	LAB VOTE	0.129	0.831**	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.599**	-0.501**	
	LAB VOTE	0.375*	1.555**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.838**	-0.634**	-3.245*
	LAB VOTE	0.574*	1.937**	-3.494**
	LD VOTE	-1.241**	-0.786**	7.634**
Model D				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.572**	-0.381	
	LAB VOTE	0.051	0.372	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.717**	-0.383**	
	LAB VOTE	0.175	1.240**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.989**	-0.487**	-3.358
	LAB VOTE	0.284	1.688**	-3.714**
	LD VOTE	-1.149**	-0.836**	8.224**

Table 6.2A - Adjusted GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

MODEL A			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	-0.054	-0.878	
	LAB VOTE	0.087	0.516	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.441	-0.518	
	LAB VOTE	-0.485	0.758	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.274	0.843	
	LAB VOTE	0.905	-0.111	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.879	-1.091**	
	LAB VOTE	-1.214*	0.534	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.153	0.653	
	LAB VOTE	-0.706	0.171	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	2.550**	-0.863	
	LAB VOTE	1.716**	0.072	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.094	-0.751	
	LAB VOTE	0.33	0.283	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	-0.277	-0.420	-2.174**
	LAB VOTE	0.291	1.663**	-6.570**
	LD VOTE	-0.863	-0.786	9.509**
1987	CON VOTE	1.000	0.105	-8.707**
	LAB VOTE	0.63	0.888	2.072
	LD VOTE	-1.701**	-0.735	5.743*
1992	CON VOTE	0.723*	-0.979	-1.217
	LAB VOTE	0.677	1.988*	-10.052**
	LD VOTE	-1.423*	-0.294	12.199**
1997	CON VOTE	0.261	-1.458**	-2.681
	LAB VOTE	0.368	1.925**	-5.268**
	LD VOTE	-1.043*	0.712	7.162**
2001	CON VOTE	1.426*	-0.065	-3.500**
	LAB VOTE	-0.321	2.504**	-4.136**
	LD VOTE	-0.972	-1.308*	8.649**
2005	CON VOTE	1.542*	-0.042	-2.416*
	LAB VOTE	-0.191	1.084*	-0.848
	LD VOTE	-0.75	-0.83	5.696**
2010	CON VOTE	1.428**	-0.336	-4.108**
	LAB VOTE	-0.085	2.226**	-2.197
	LD VOTE	-0.623	-1.416**	5.242**

Table 6.2B - Adjusted GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

MODEL B			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	-0.171	-0.992	
	LAB VOTE	0.307	0.45	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.048	-0.477	
	LAB VOTE	-0.369	0.714	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.058	0.724	
	LAB VOTE	0.685	-0.3	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.982	-1.235**	
	LAB VOTE	-1.238	0.59	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.235	0.411	
	LAB VOTE	-0.354	0.324	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	1.232*	-1.102	
	LAB VOTE	1.631**	0.095	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.305	-1.289*	
	LAB VOTE	0.602	1.128*	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.013	-0.706	-2.760**
	LAB VOTE	-0.05	2.258**	-5.452**
	LD VOTE	-0.695	-1.299*	8.982**
1987	CON VOTE	0.803	0.009	-6.158
	LAB VOTE	0.797	0.931	-0.762
	LD VOTE	-1.699**	-0.868	7.049**
1992	CON VOTE	0.527	-0.627	-3.043
	LAB VOTE	0.672	1.730*	-7.941**
	LD VOTE	-1.307*	-0.354	15.473**
1997	CON VOTE	0.462	-1.293**	-2.867
	LAB VOTE	0.473	2.283**	-4.355
	LD VOTE	-1.226**	0.8	7.546**
2001	CON VOTE	1.276*	-0.292	-4.466**
	LAB VOTE	-0.27	2.184**	-4.764**
	LD VOTE	-1.149	-1.243*	9.220**
2005	CON VOTE	2.059**	-0.115	-3.053**
	LAB VOTE	-0.515	1.5**	-0.325
	LD VOTE	-0.756	0.58	5.397**
2010	CON VOTE	1.136*	-0.364	-3.889**
	LAB VOTE	2.11	1.901**	-1.61
	LD VOTE	-0.636	-1.410**	6.307**

Table 6.2C - Adjusted GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

MODEL C			INCUMBENT	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.01	-0.976	
	LAB VOTE	0.179	0.726	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.19	-0.629	
	LAB VOTE	-0.498	1.352**	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.103	0.433	
	LAB VOTE	0.888	0	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.945*	-1.048**	
	LAB VOTE	-1.383**	1.153**	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.254	0.675	
	LAB VOTE	-0.412	0.811	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.939	-1.758*	
	LAB VOTE	1.214*	1.163	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.524	-1.275*	
	LAB VOTE	0.863	1.111*	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.101	-0.126	-2.461**
	LAB VOTE	0.107	1.933**	-5.482**
	LD VOTE	-0.589	-1.416*	7.799**
1987	CON VOTE	0.556	-0.153	-6.919**
	LAB VOTE	0.715	1.391*	1.255
	LD VOTE	-1.531**	-0.819	5.194*
1992	CON VOTE	0.548	-1.207	-2.921
	LAB VOTE	0.774	1.2	-9.643**
	LD VOTE	-1.377*	-0.131	16.755**
1997	CON VOTE	0.386	-1.784**	-0.934
	LAB VOTE	0.702	2.785**	-2.765
	LD VOTE	-1.430**	0.563	0.077
2001	CON VOTE	1.270*	-0.801	-4.565*
	LAB VOTE	-0.253	3.037**	-3.187
	LD VOTE	-1.18	-1.455	7.717**
2005	CON VOTE	2.122**	0.407	-1.84
	LAB VOTE	-0.57	1.908**	0.151
	LD VOTE	-0.732	-0.877	4.066*
2010	CON VOTE	1.106*	-0.313	-4.582**
	LAB VOTE	0.201	2.124**	-0.279
	LD VOTE	-0.624	-1.518**	6.195**

Table 6.2D - Adjusted GKI estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

MODEL D			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	-0.01	-0.916	
	LAB VOTE	0.342	0.399	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.262	-0.261	
	LAB VOTE	-0.245	0.894	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.117	0.92	
	LAB VOTE	0.694	-0.523	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.744	-1.242**	
	LAB VOTE	-1.235*	0.722	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.286	0.177	
	LAB VOTE	-0.319	0.72	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.935	-0.75	
	LAB VOTE	1.384*	0.669	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.238	-0.993	
	LAB VOTE	0.85	0.634	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.172	-0.989*	-2.971**
	LAB VOTE	-0.213	2.545**	-5.033**
	LD VOTE	-0.662	-1.058*	9.099**
1987	CON VOTE	0.467	0.093	-5.102*
	LAB VOTE	0.779	0.833	1.707
	LD VOTE	-1.364*	-0.807	4.192
1992	CON VOTE	0.648*	-0.642	-2.681
	LAB VOTE	0.456	1.401	-7.13**
	LD VOTE	-1.242*	-0.001	14.680**
1997	CON VOTE	0.505	-1.375**	-2.64
	LAB VOTE	0.21	2.009**	-5.452
	LD VOTE	-1.015*	1.013	7.715**
2001	CON VOTE	1.386*	-0.187	-3.652**
	LAB VOTE	-0.616	2.153**	-6.607**
	LD VOTE	-0.918	-1.361*	11.207**
2005	CON VOTE	1.800**	-0.118	-2.192
	LAB VOTE	-0.939	1.645**	-0.3
	LD VOTE	-0.061	-0.669	4.602**
2010	CON VOTE	1.524**	-0.408	-3.458**
	LAB VOTE	-0.032	2.428**	-2.14
	LD VOTE	-0.585	-1.665**	6.344**

Table 6.3 - MULTI ELECTION SLURGE estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

		INCUMBENT		
		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM
Model A				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.431**	-0.077	
	LAB VOTE	0.074	0.856**	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.728**	-0.315**	
	LAB VOTE	0.086	1.278**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.971**	-0.467**	-0.932**
	LAB VOTE	0.036	1.750**	-0.998**
	LD VOTE	-0.932**	-0.998**	4.669*
Model B				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.685**	-0.350**	
	LAB VOTE	0.078	1.313**	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.366**	-0.175	
	LAB VOTE	0.144	0.667**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.929**	-0.465**	-0.906**
	LAB VOTE	0.025	1.771**	-1.021**
	LD VOTE	-0.906**	-1.012**	4.601**
Model C				
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.326**	-0.249	
	LAB VOTE	0.074	0.856**	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.640**	-0.462**	
	LAB VOTE	0.099	1.530**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.864**	-0.608**	-0.898**
	LAB VOTE	0.126	2.024**	-1.116**
	LD VOTE	-0.898**	-1.116**	4.311**
MODEL D				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.674**	-0.343**	
	LAB VOTE	0.091	1.313**	
	LD VOTE			
1959 - 1979	CON VOTE	0.372**	-0.143	
	LAB VOTE	0.15	0.632**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.905**	-0.465**	-0.922**
	LAB VOTE	0.04	1.787**	-1.018**
	LD VOTE	-0.922**	-1.018**	4.796**

Table 6.3A - Slurge estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

GB WIDE		Retire/first term		
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.183	-0.161	
	LAB VOTE	-0.357	0.15	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.862**	-0.912*	
	LAB VOTE	0.223	0.955*	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.358	0.193	
	LAB VOTE	0.022	0.911**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	0.132	-0.653*	
	LAB VOTE	-0.523	0.608*	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.165	-0.084	
	LAB VOTE	0.005	0.342	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.925**	0.618*	
	LAB VOTE	0.677**	0.596**	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	0.01	-0.81	
	LAB VOTE	0.024	0.498	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.052	-0.504	-6.286*
	LAB VOTE	0.426	2.982**	1.455
	LD VOTE	-1.383**	-2.260**	10.947*
1987	CON VOTE	1.390**	-0.2	-3.557**
	LAB VOTE	-0.082	1.455**	0.37
	LD VOTE	-1.520**	-1.064**	4.012**
1992	CON VOTE	0.947**	-0.514	0.551
	LAB VOTE	0.35	1.873**	0.775
	LD VOTE	-1.209**	-1.043*	0.548
1997	CON VOTE	0.346	-1.151**	-0.569
	LAB VOTE	0.258	2.380**	-1.537
	LD VOTE	-0.858**	0.353	3.800**
2001	CON VOTE	0.316	-0.003	-2.551**
	LAB VOTE	-0.713	1.772**	-1.367
	LD VOTE	0.223	-1.437**	4.384**
2005	CON VOTE	1.929**	-0.476	-2.063**
	LAB VOTE	0.029	1.79**	-1.496*
	LD VOTE	-1.193*	-1.025**	5.233**
2010	CON VOTE	1.686**	-0.38	-1.864**
	LAB VOTE	0.457	1.670**	-0.39
	LD VOTE	-0.963*	-0.810*	4.265**

Table 6.3B - Slurge estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

GB REGION			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.078	-0.319	
	LAB VOTE	-0.158	0.389	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.699**	-0.695**	
	LAB VOTE	0.279	0.809*	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.198	0.027	
	LAB VOTE	0.253	0.852**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	0.076	-0.737**	
	LAB VOTE	-0.513	0.739**	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.239	-0.204	
	LAB VOTE	0.035	0.449	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.660**	0.401	
	LAB VOTE	0.671**	0.709**	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	0.169	-1.321**	
	LAB VOTE	-0.095	1.554**	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.121	-0.489	-7.374*
	LAB VOTE	0.169	3.07**	3.384
	LD VOTE	-1.340**	-2.642**	12.917**
1987	CON VOTE	1.008**	-0.06	-1.774*
	LAB VOTE	-0.007	1.347**	-0.827
	LD VOTE	-1.436**	-1.158**	4.148**
1992	CON VOTE	0.842**	-0.605*	-0.51
	LAB VOTE	0.251	2.105**	2.409
	LD VOTE	-1.061**	-0.853	1.281
1997	CON VOTE	0.439*	-1.060**	0.331
	LAB VOTE	0.324	1.965**	-1.946
	LD VOTE	-0.978**	0.393	4.209**
2001	CON VOTE	0.349	0.084	-3.173**
	LAB VOTE	-0.725	1.735**	-1.317
	LD VOTE	0.253	-1.432**	4.653**
2005	CON VOTE	2.020**	-0.43	-2.097**
	LAB VOTE	0.035	1.718**	-1.721**
	LD VOTE	-1.260*	-1.068**	4.970**
2010	CON VOTE	1.475**	-0.357	-2.194**
	LAB VOTE	0.261	1.331**	-0.24
	LD VOTE	-.0.869*	-0.760*	4.142**

Table 6.3C - Slurge estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

ENG REGION			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.143	-0.077	
	LAB VOTE	-0.215	0.471	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.864**	-0.687*	
	LAB VOTE	0.169	0.747	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	-0.025	0.047	
	LAB VOTE	0.359	0.884**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	0.073	-0.677**	
	LAB VOTE	-0.690*	1.050**	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.403	-0.109	
	LAB VOTE	0.04	1.050*	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.572**	0.16	
	LAB VOTE	0.467*	0.707**	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.113	-1.501**	
	LAB VOTE	0.239	1.641**	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.205	-0.261	n/a
	LAB VOTE	0.418	3.061**	n/a
	LD VOTE	-1.046**	-2.581**	n/a
1987	CON VOTE	0.927**	-0.172	-2.938**
	LAB VOTE	-0.074	1.666**	1.573
	LD VOTE	-1.178**	-1.390**	1.365
1992	CON VOTE	0.851**	-0.984**	3.495*
	LAB VOTE	0.304	1.980**	2.51
	LD VOTE	-1.058**	-0.648	-2.281
1997	CON VOTE	0.396	-1.230**	-1.768
	LAB VOTE	0.624	2.193**	2.574
	LD VOTE	-1.174**	0.198	4.52
2001	CON VOTE	0.339	-0.108	-3.102**
	LAB VOTE	-0.698	2.119**	-0.126
	LD VOTE	0.24	-1.658**	3.715**
2005	CON VOTE	2.046**	-0.08	-1.634*
	LAB VOTE	-0.139	2.293**	-1.068
	LD VOTE	-1.230*	-1.485**	4.4046**
2010	CON VOTE	1.478**	-0.219	-2.447**
	LAB VOTE	0.331	1.513**	0.215
	LD VOTE	-0.911*	-0.858*	4.162**

Table 6.3D - Slurge estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

GB WIDE COUNTY		INCUMBENT		
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.117	-0.233	
	LAB VOTE	-0.094	0.386	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.558*	-0.569	
	LAB VOTE	0.337	0.695*	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.178	0.023	
	LAB VOTE	0.112	0.741**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	0.257	-0.706**	
	LAB VOTE	-0.463	0.871**	
	LD VOTE			
1974-F	CON VOTE	0.182	-0.151	
	LAB VOTE	-0.079	0.69	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	0.569**	0.343	
	LAB VOTE	0.526**	0.718**	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	0.16	-1.076**	
	LAB VOTE	0.129	1.083**	
	LD VOTE			
1983	CON VOTE	0.111	-0.558	-7.008*
	LAB VOTE	0.267	3.061**	-3.299
	LD VOTE	-1.439**	-2.447**	21.433**
1987	CON VOTE	0.754**	0.102	-1.767
	LAB VOTE	0.084	1.243**	0.861
	LD VOTE	-1.309**	-1.191**	2.307
1992	CON VOTE	0.892**	-0.503**	-0.493
	LAB VOTE	0.2	1.927**	3.580**
	LD VOTE	-1.051**	-0.787	1.354
1997	CON VOTE	0.435*	-1.134**	-0.343
	LAB VOTE	0.14	1.886**	-1.82
	LD VOTE	-0.788**	0.537	3.984*
2001	CON VOTE	0.49	0.285	-3.119**
	LAB VOTE	-1.010*	1.694**	-2.090**
	LD VOTE	0.492	-1.422**	5.823**
2005	CON VOTE	1.875**	-0.352	-1.619**
	LAB VOTE	-0.217	1.804**	-1.583*
	LD VOTE	-0.935	-1.092**	4.609**
2010	CON VOTE	1.670**	-0.34	-1.503*
	LAB VOTE	0.153	1.631**	-0.554
	LD VOTE	-0.855	-0.970**	3.807**

Table 6.4 - GKI & Slurge model in Scotland: % total vote

		INCUMBENT			
GKI		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM	SNP
Model A					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.182	-0.409	-4.143**	-1.947*
	LAB VOTE	-2.016*	0.363	-6.341**	-2.905*
	LD VOTE	0.063	-0.546	13.114**	-3.623*
	SNP VOTE	1.694	0.12	-2.954*	7.182**
Model D					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.15	-0.433	-4.177**	-1.945*
	LAB VOTE	-1.947*	0.495	-6.208**	-2.811*
	LD VOTE	-0.091	-0.591	13.214**	-3.798**
	SNP VOTE	1.764	0.002	-3.442**	7.452**
Model A					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.497	-0.507	-3.981**	-2.224**
	LAB VOTE	-4.615**	0.527	6.145**	-1.548
	LD VOTE	1.231	-0.435	12.832**	-4.359*
	SNP VOTE	2.565	0.045	-3.139**	7.058**
Model D					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.707	-0.497	-3.892**	-2.228**
	LAB VOTE	-4.979**	0.655	-6.163**	-1.078
	LD VOTE	0.848	-0.503	12.876**	-4.731**
	SNP VOTE	3.234**	-0.05	-3.466**	6.96**
SLURGE					
Model A					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.477	-0.312	-3.075**	-0.475
	LAB VOTE	-0.121	0.566*	-2.251**	-2.154**
	LD VOTE	1.275	-0.388	6.725**	-0.234
	SNP VOTE	1.035	0.205	-2.276*	2.328*
Model D					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.405	-3.2	-2.991	-0.432
	LAB VOTE	-0.132	0.550*	-2.362**	-2.143**
	LD VOTE	-1.347*	-0.391	6.759**	-0.123
	SNP VOTE	0.922	0.149	-2.334*	2.320**
Model A					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.31	-0.319	-3.090**	-1.755*
	LAB VOTE	-0.374	0.794**	-2.202**	-1.866
	LD VOTE	-1.643	-0.399	6.755**	-0.066
	SNP VOTE	2.138**	0.3	-2.392**	3.339**
Model D					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.268	-0.319	'-2.944**	-1.627*
	LAB VOTE	-0.415	0.761*	-2.332**	-1.733
	LD VOTE	-1.633	-0.396	6.751**	-0.285
	SNP VOTE	2.125**	-0.02	-2.542**	3.334**

Table 6.5 - GKI & Slurge model in Wales: % total vote

		INCUMBENT			
GKI		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM	PC
Model A					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.252	-0.366	-1.876	0.32
	LAB VOTE	-0.383	1.962**	-2.816	-5.622**
	LD VOTE	-0.849	-0.831	2.094	0.063
	PC VOTE	0.234	-0.035	2.974	6.276**
Model D					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.414	-0.408	1.376	-0.378
	LAB VOTE	-0.435	1.914**	-2.957	5.630**
	LD VOTE	-1.047	-0.947	2.902	0.049
	PC VOTE	0.167	-0.005	2.312	6.148**
Model A					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.272	-0.188	-3.307	-0.495
	LAB VOTE	-0.634	2.134**	-1.327	-4.479*
	LD VOTE	-0.326	0.926	2.059	-0.723
	PC VOTE	0.063	-0.288	2.79	5.996**
Model D					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.494	-0.219	-2.924	-0.583
	LAB VOTE	-0.163	2.022*	-2.027	-4.378*
	LD VOTE	-1.527	-0.964	3.628	-0.756
	PC VOTE	0.21	-0.191	1.952	5.838**
SLURGE					
Model A					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.195	-0.071	-2.077	-0.581
	LAB VOTE	-0.068	1.782**	-1.076	-3.418**
	LD VOTE	-0.875	-0.895	3.790*	-0.254
	PC VOTE	0.238	-0.207	-1.58	4.810**
Model D					
1974 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.143	-0.084	-1.849	-0.581
	LAB VOTE	0.073	1.638**	-1.265	-3.278**
	LD VOTE	-1.21	-0.909	4.274*	-0.273
	PC VOTE	0.61	-0.218	-1.837	4.750**
Model A					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.575	-0.161	-1.125	-0.784
	LAB VOTE	-0.33	2.107**	-1.192	-3.032*
	LD VOTE	-1.258	-1.102*	3.755*	-1.366
	PC VOTE	0.571	-0.179	-1.77	6.421**
Model D					
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.505	-0.161	-1.057	-0.765
	LAB VOTE	0.171	2.012**	-1.628	-2.678*
	LD VOTE	-2.040*	-0.98	4.178*	-1.339
	PC VOTE	0.956	-0.204	-1.828	6.228**

Table 6.6 - SLURGE DOUBLE INCUMBENCY 1959-2010 : % total vote

		INCUMBENT		
		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM
Model A				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.259**	-0.818*	
	LAB VOTE	-2.144**	1.269**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.505**	-1.315**	-0.919*
	LAB VOTE	-2.551**	1.651**	-0.713
	LD VOTE	-2.135**	-0.901	4.030**
Model B				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.230**	-0.840*	
	LAB VOTE	-2.144**	1.371**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.566**	-1.377**	-0.876*
	LAB VOTE	-2.540**	1.711**	-0.745*
	LD VOTE	-2.001**	-0.867	4.007**
Model C				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.215**	-0.622*	
	LAB VOTE	-2.257**	1.485**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.556**	-1.007*	-0.788
	LAB VOTE	-2.623**	2.042**	-0.707
	LD VOTE	-2.068**	-1.347	4.351**
MODEL D				
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.235**	-0.766*	
	LAB VOTE	-2.138**	1.345**	
	LD VOTE			
1983 - 2010	CON VOTE	2.582**	-1.274**	-0.953*
	LAB VOTE	-2.462**	1.704**	-0.765*
	LD VOTE	-1.809**	-1.135	4.285**

Table 6.7 - Slurge by region 1983 - 2010

	CONSERVATIVE VOTE			LABOUR VOTE			LIBERAL DEMOCRAT VOTE		
	CON INC	LAB INC	LD inc	CON INC	LAB INC	LD inc	CON INC	LAB INC	LD inc
SW	0.511	-1.154*	-2.020**	0.387	4.664**	-1.851*	-0.932*	-3.326**	5.088**
SE	0.726**	-0.966*	-2.372**	0.260	2.240**	-3.298**	-0.722**	-1.645*	5.006**
LON	0.894**	-0.722*	-1.374	-1.018*	3.659**	-2.842	-0.124	-1.802**	4.666*
Wales	0.575	-0.161	-1.125	-0.330	2.107**	-1.192	-1.258	-1.102*	3.755*
WM	0.516	-0.853**	0.507	-0.635	1.933**	-0.087	0.135	-1.268**	-0.357
EM	0.966**	-0.828	-6.394*	0.875*	0.898	-1.298	-1.657**	0.329	9.518**
EE	0.935**	-0.418	-5.380*	0.302	1.610*	-3.160	-1.417**	-1.392	9.816**
NW	1.717**	-0.612*	0.555	-0.442	1.505**	0.348	-1.046*	-0.457	0.750
Y&H	0.900*	-0.265	-3.364**	-0.462	1.374**	0.335	-0.471	-0.987*	3.955**
NE	2.737**	0.178	-	0.453	1.426**	-	-3.101*	-1.570**	-
Scot	0.310	-0.319	-3.090**	-0.374	0.794**	-2.202**	-1.643	-0.399	6.755**

Table 6.8 - GKI & Slurge in metro/non-metro areas

GKI - model A

	C 1959 - 1979	C 1959 - 2010	C 1983 - 2010	Lab 1959 - 197!	Lab 1959 - 201(	Lab 1983 - 201(	LD 1983 - 2010
Metro	1.144**	1.064**	1.136**	0.585**	1.143**	1.466**	6.081**
Non Metro	0.122	0.600**	0.892**	0.120	1.253**	1.770**	9.276**

Slurge - model A

	C 1959 - 1979	C 1959 - 2010	C 1983 - 2010	Lab 1959 - 197!	Lab 1959 - 201(	Lab 1983 - 201(	LD 1983 - 2010
Metro	0.733**	0.931**	1.213**	0.719**	1.248**	1.629**	3.675**
Non Metro	0.284	0.641**	0.876**	0.515**	1.358**	1.929**	5.058**

Table 6.9a Effects of incumbency on General Election results 1959 - 1979

Adjustments made using GKI model A

	Conservative	Labour	Other	Result
1959 Actual	365	258	7	Con maj 100
Net incumbency effect on seats	-9	9		
1959 without incumbency	374	249	7	Con maj 118
1964 Actual	303	317	10	Lab maj 4
Net incumbency effect on seats	4	-4		
1964 without incumbency	297	321	10	Lab maj 12
1966 Actual	253	363	14	Lab maj 96
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*		
1996 without incumbency	253	363	14	Lab maj 96
1970 Actual	330	287	13	Con maj 30
Net incumbency effect on seats	-10	10		
1970 without incumbency	340	277	13	Con maj 50
1974 Feb Actual	296	301	38	Lab short by 17
Net incumbency effect on seats	8	-8		
1974 Feb without incumbency	288	309	38	Lab short by 9
1974 Oct Actual	276	319	40	Lab maj 3
Net incumbency effect on seats	7	-7		
1974 Oct incumbency	269	326	40	Lab maj 17
1979 Actual	339	268	28	Con maj 43
Net incumbency effect on seats	-7	7		
1979 without incumbency	346	261	28	Con maj 57

Table 6.9b Effects of incumbency on General Election results 1983 - 2010

Adjustments made using GKI model A

	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Other	Result
1983 Actual	397	209	23	21	Con Maj 144
Net incumbency effect on seats	-17	6	11		
1983 without incumbency	414	203	12	21	Con Maj 178
1987 Actual	376	229	22	24	Con Maj 102
Net incumbency effect on seats	0	-9	9		
1987 without incumbency	376	238	13	24	Con Maj 102
1992 Actual	336	271	20	24	Con Maj 21
Net incumbency effect on seats	-4	-2	6		
1992 without incumbency	340	273	14	24	Con Maj 29
1997 Actual	165	419	46	29	Lab maj 179
Net incumbency effect on seats	1	-3	2		
1997 without incumbency	164	422	44	29	Lab maj 185
2001 Actual	166	413	52	28	Lab maj 167
Net incumbency effect on seats	-18	6	12		
2001 without incumbency	184	407	40	28	Lab maj 155
2005 Actual	198	356	62	30	Lab maj 66
Net incumbency effect on seats	-23	9	14		
2005 without incumbency	221	346	48	30	Lab maj 48
2010 Actual	307	258	57	28	Con short by 19
Net incumbency effect on seats	-13	1	12		
2010 without incumbency	320	257	45	28	Con short by 6

Table 6.9c Effects of incumbency on General Election results 1959 - 1979

Adjustments made using slurge model B

	Conservative	Labour	Other	Result
1959 Actual	365	258	7	Con maj 100
Net incumbency effect on seats	-1	1		
1959 without incumbency change	366	257	7	Con maj 102
1964 Actual	303	317	10	Lab maj 4
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*		
1964 without incumbency change	303	317	10	Lab maj 4
1966 Actual	253	363	14	Lab maj 96
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*		
1996 without incumbency change	253	363	14	Lab maj 96
1970 Actual	330	287	13	Con maj 30
Net incumbency effect on seats	-3	3		
1970 without incumbency change	333	284	13	Con maj 36
1974 Feb Actual	296	301	38	Lab short by 17
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*		
1974 Feb w/t incumbency change	296	301	38	Lab short by 17
1974 Oct Actual	276	319	40	Lab maj 3
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*		
1974 Oct w/t incumbency change	276	319	40	Lab maj 3
1979 Actual	339	268	28	Con maj 43
Net incumbency effect on seats	-2	2		
1979 without incumbency change	341	266	28	Con maj 47

Table 6.9d Effects of incumbency on General Election results 1983 - 2010

Adjustments made using slurge model B

	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Other	Result
1983 Actual	397	209	23	21	Con Maj 144
Net incumbency effect on seats	1	-1	*nil*		
1983 without incumbency change	396	210	23	21	Con Maj 142
1987 Actual	376	229	22	24	Con Maj 102
Net incumbency effect on seats	5	-4	-1		
1987 without incumbency change	371	233	23	24	Con Maj 92
1992 Actual	336	271	20	24	Con Maj 21
Net incumbency effect on seats	-2	2	*nil*		
1992 without incumbency change	338	269	20	24	Con Maj 25
1997 Actual	165	419	46	29	Lab maj 179
Net incumbency effect on seats	*nil*	*nil*	*nil*		
1997 without incumbency change	165	419	46	29	Lab maj 185
2001 Actual	166	413	52	28	Lab maj 167
Net incumbency effect on seats	-8	4	4		
2001 without incumbency change	174	409	48	28	Lab maj 159
2005 Actual	198	356	62	30	Lab maj 66
Net incumbency effect on seats	3	-2	-1		
2005 without incumbency change	201	358	63	30	Lab maj 70
2010 Actual	307	258	57	28	Con short by 19
Net incumbency effect on seats	5	-3	-2		
2010 without incumbency change	302	261	59	28	Con short by 24

Table 6.10 - MULTI ELECTION GKI estimates for REPEAT & INCUMBENT canadiates 1959-2010 : % total vote

		REPEAT			INCUMBENT		
		CON	LAB	LIB DEM	CON	LAB	LIB DEM
Model A							
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.368*	0.312*		0.855**	-0.443**	
	LAB VOTE	0.099	0.537**		0.117	1.122**	
	LD VOTE						
1987 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.926**	0.246	-0.319*	1.245**	-0.368	-3.839**
	LAB VOTE	0.308	0.902**	-1.992*	0.308	1.507**	-1.992*
	LD VOTE	-0.653	-1.206**	1.323**	-1.286**	-0.606*	6.767**
Model B							
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.279*	0.199		0.822**	-0.570**	
	LAB VOTE	0.196	0.593**		0.106	1.210**	
	LD VOTE						
1987 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.004**	0.064	-0.382*	1.263**	-0.430*	-3.883**
	LAB VOTE	0.267	0.975**	-0.929**	0.266	1.533**	-2.105**
	LD VOTE	-0.778*	-1.247**	1.397**	-1.258**	-0.643*	6.849**
Model C							
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.225	0.049		0.674**	-0.803**	
	LAB VOTE	0.3	0.654**		0.284	1.650**	
	LD VOTE						
1987 - 2010	CON VOTE	1.160**	0.035	-0.409**	1.081**	-0.737*	-3.678**
	LAB VOTE	0.371	0.895**	-0.843**	0.481	1.962**	-1.748
	LD VOTE	-1.174**	-1.139**	1.372**	-1.356**	-0.664*	6.615**
MODEL D							
1959 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.264	0.167		0.837**	-0.571**	
	LAB VOTE	0.199	0.648**		0.088	1.226**	
	LD VOTE						
1987 - 2010	CON VOTE	0.942**	0.063	-0.399**	1.267**	-0.438*	-3.731**
	LAB VOTE	0.278	1.023**	-0.993**	0.247	1.580**	-2.344**
	LD VOTE	-0.688*	-1.327**	1.464**	-1.267**	-0.692**	7.089**

Table 6.10A - repeat estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

GB WIDE		Retire/first term		
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.323	0.948*	
	LAB VOTE	0.122	-0.037	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.846	0.265	
	LAB VOTE	-0.236	0.185	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.532*	-0.491	
	LAB VOTE	-0.194	1.058**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.132	0.223	
	LAB VOTE	0.114	0.117	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	-0.105	0.211	
	LAB VOTE	-0.373	0.517*	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.023	0.076	
	LAB VOTE	-0.687	1.321	
	LD VOTE			
1987	CON VOTE	-0.357	2.600**	-0.262
	LAB VOTE	0.931	-0.428	-0.106
	LD VOTE	-1.247	-2.747**	0.733*
1992	CON VOTE	0.658	-0.06	0.514
	LAB VOTE	0.542	0.088	-1.289*
	LD VOTE	0.142	-0.974	0.58
1997	CON VOTE	-2.167**	-1.218**	-0.368
	LAB VOTE	0.94	0.229	-1.776**
	LD VOTE	2.834	-0.746	1.924**
2001	CON VOTE	1.304**	1.233	-0.521
	LAB VOTE	-0.019	3.705**	-1.231**
	LD VOTE	-1.046	-2.219*	1.540**
2005	CON VOTE	1.786**	-0.088	-0.597
	LAB VOTE	-0.069	-0.328	0.236
	LD VOTE	-1.964**	448	0.53
2010	CON VOTE	-0.226	-0.755	0.352
	LAB VOTE	-1.979*	-0.742	-0.882
	LD VOTE	0.313	1.72	1.631**

Table 6.10B - repeat estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

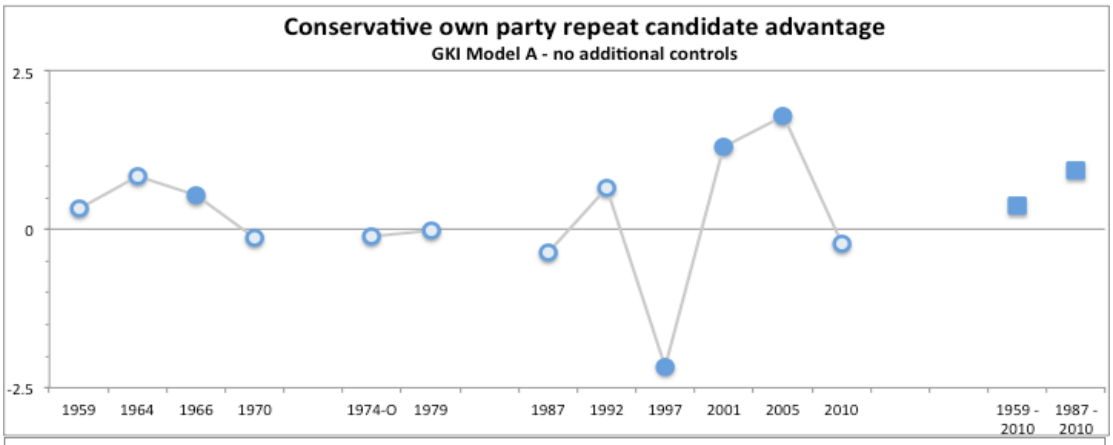
GB REGION			**INCUMBENT**	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.411	1.155**	
	LAB VOTE	-0.061	-0.38	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.579	0.371	
	LAB VOTE	0.030	-0.088	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.504	-0.647	
	LAB VOTE	-0.063	1.241**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.034	-0.049	
	LAB VOTE	0.149	0.305	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	-0.615**	0.061	
	LAB VOTE	-0.480*	0.534*	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.544	-0.237	
	LAB VOTE	0.336	1.711**	
	LD VOTE			
1987	CON VOTE	0.67	1.142*	-0.416
	LAB VOTE	0.142	0.526	-0.179
	LD VOTE	-1.044	-2.685**	0.995**
1992	CON VOTE	1.019	-0.152	0.401
	LAB VOTE	-0.991	-0.01	-1.008
	LD VOTE	-0.682	-0.568	0.999
1997	CON VOTE	-1.1653	-0.965**	-0.478
	LAB VOTE	0.739	0.201	-1.479**
	LD VOTE	-1.283**	0.813	1.795**
2001	CON VOTE	2.063**	0.72	-0.747*
	LAB VOTE	0.018	3.659**	-1.141*
	LD VOTE	-1.38	-2.138*	1.471**
2005	CON VOTE	1.477**	-0.109	-0.461
	LAB VOTE	0.86	-0.285	0.23
	LD VOTE	-1.705**	0.545	0.593
2010	CON VOTE	0.22	-1.25	-0.736**
	LAB VOTE	-1.816**	0.822	-0.07
	LD VOTE	0.274	0.909	1.350**

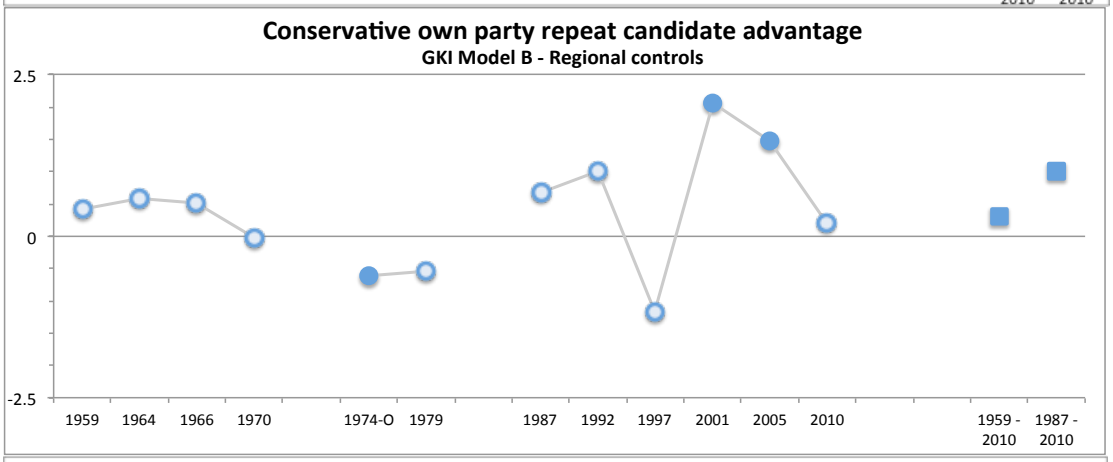
Table 6.10C - repeat estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

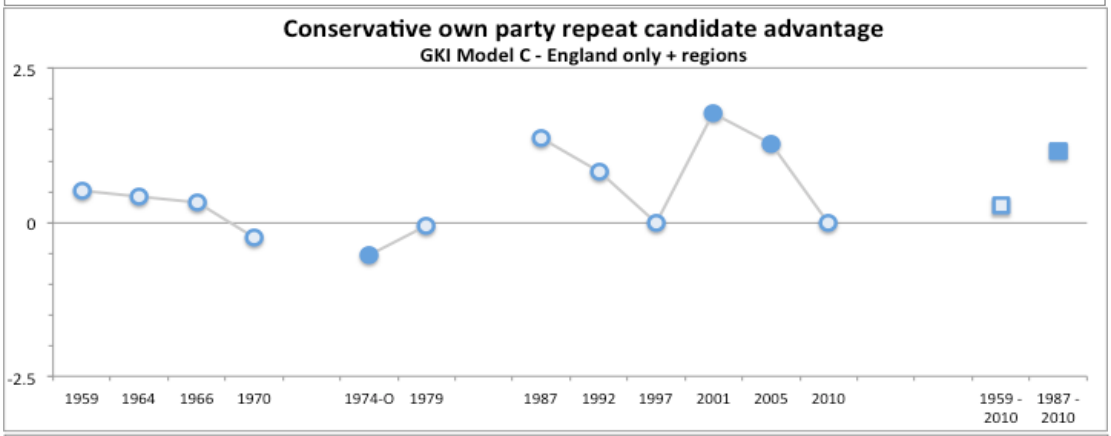
ENG REGION		INCUMBENT		
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.504	0.471	
	LAB VOTE	-0.167	0.119	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.413	0.068	
	LAB VOTE	0.221	-0.121	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.32	-0.472	
	LAB VOTE	1.002*	-0.022	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.238	0.208	
	LAB VOTE	0.097	0.773	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	-0.531**	0.224	
	LAB VOTE	-0.098	0.327	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.054	-0.063	
	LAB VOTE	0.503	1.583**	
	LD VOTE			
1987	CON VOTE	1.378	1.090**	-0.489
	LAB VOTE	-0.458	0.576	-0.28
	LD VOTE	-1.124	-2.379**	0.857*
1992	CON VOTE	0.827	-0.258	0.574
	LAB VOTE	-1.147	-0.316	-0.972
	LD VOTE	-0.246	-0.22	0.732
1997	CON VOTE	-0.317	-0.973**	-0.401
	LAB VOTE	3.655	-0.06	-1.368**
	LD VOTE	-3.149	-0.826	1.933**
2001	CON VOTE	1.780**	0.676	-0.798**
	LAB VOTE	0.434	3.625**	-1.425**
	LD VOTE	-1.727*	-2.058*	1.640**
2005	CON VOTE	1.283**	-0.136	-0.399
	LAB VOTE	0.679	-0.211	0.226
	LD VOTE	-1.674*	0.436	0.431
2010	CON VOTE	-0.004	-1.08	-0.813*
	LAB VOTE	-1.332	0.695	-0.095
	LD VOTE	-0.153	0.828	1.412**

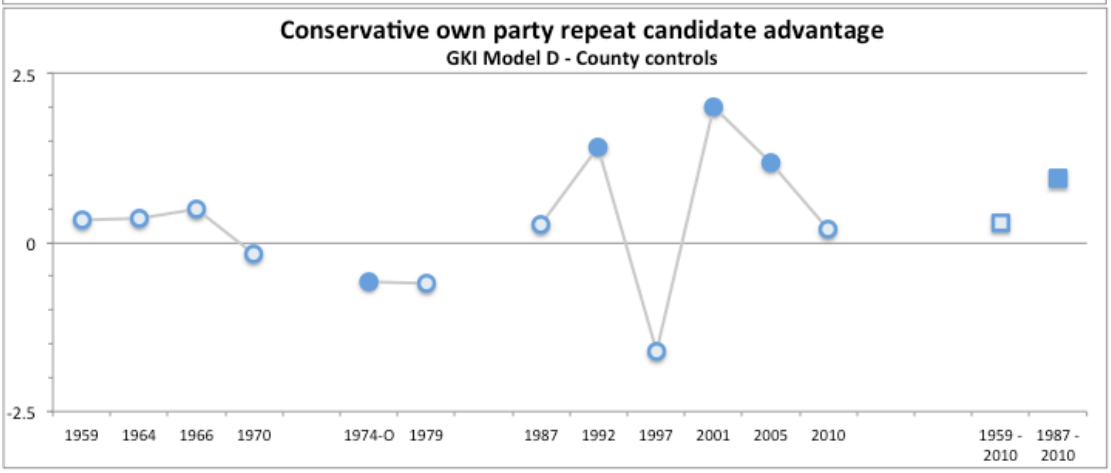
Table 6.10D - repeat estimates 1959-2010 : % total vote

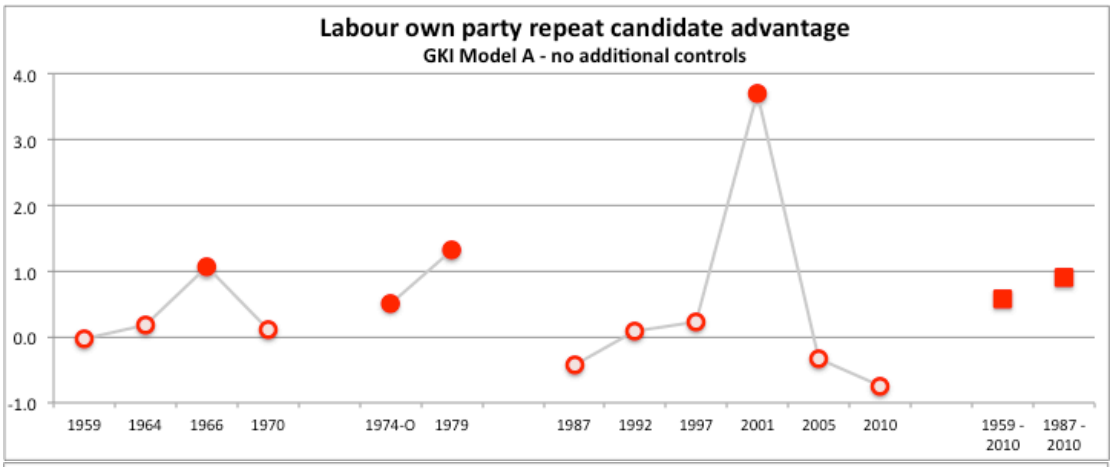
GB WIDE COUNTY			INCUMBENT	
ELECTION		CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM /ALLIANCE
1959	CON VOTE	0.334	0.609	
	LAB VOTE	-0.078	-0.120	
	LD VOTE			
1964	CON VOTE	0.358	0.141	
	LAB VOTE	0.14	0.099	
	LD VOTE			
1966	CON VOTE	0.504	-0.675*	
	LAB VOTE	-0.021	1.182**	
	LD VOTE			
1970	CON VOTE	-0.176	-0.032	
	LAB VOTE	0.175	0.414	
	LD VOTE			
1974-O	CON VOTE	-0.571**	0.162	
	LAB VOTE	-0.342	0.631**	
	LD VOTE			
1979	CON VOTE	-0.604	0.073	
	LAB VOTE	0.383	1.373*	
	LD VOTE			
1987	CON VOTE	0.262	0.945*	-0.572*
	LAB VOTE	0.523	0.558	-0.137
	LD VOTE	-1.114	-2.538**	1.080**
1992	CON VOTE	1.421*	-0.178	0.385
	LAB VOTE	0.034	-0.245	-0.652
	LD VOTE	-1.821	-0.355	0.568
1997	CON VOTE	-1.609	-0.903*	-0.21
	LAB VOTE	0.497	-0.028	-1.787**
	LD VOTE	1.144	-0.795	2.124**
2001	CON VOTE	2.009**	0.906	-0.679
	LAB VOTE	-0.261	3.710**	-1.094**
	LD VOTE	-1.153	-2.355*	1.421**
2005	CON VOTE	1.184**	0.083	-0.262
	LAB VOTE	0.897	-0.362	0.056
	LD VOTE	-1.481*	0.272	0.722
2010	CON VOTE	0.207	-1.413	0.567
	LAB VOTE	-1.306*	0.272	-0.274
	LD VOTE	-0.039	1.381	1.309**

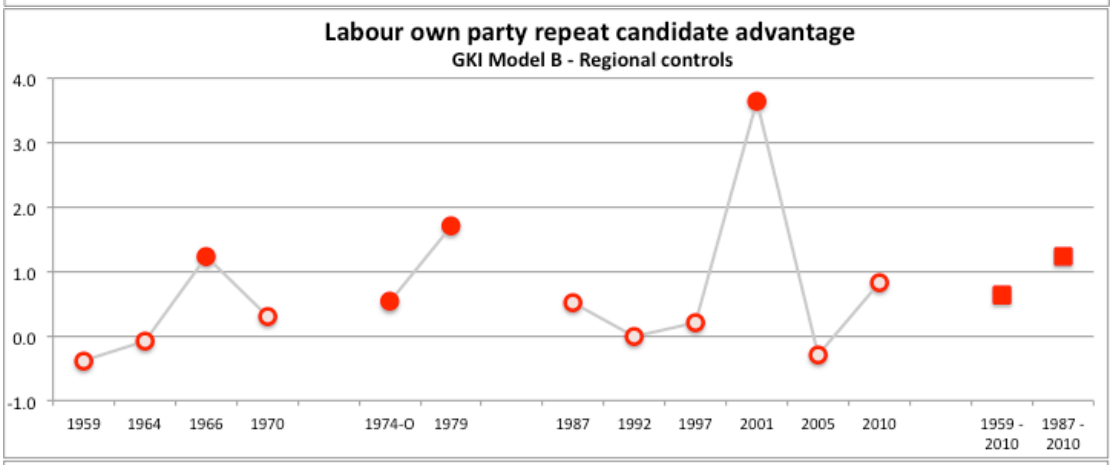

Conservative own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model A - no additional controls
2.5
0
-2.5
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010

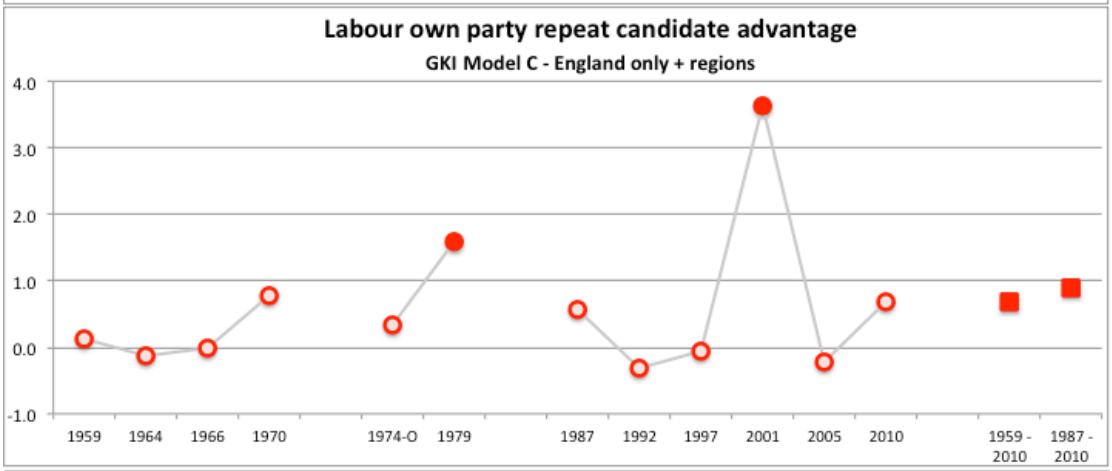

Conservative own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model B - Regional controls
2.5
0
-2.5
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010


Conservative own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model C - England only + regions
2.5
0
-2.5
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010


Conservative own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model D - County controls
2.5
0
-2.5
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010


Labour own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model A - no additional controls
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
-1.0
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010


Labour own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model B - Regional controls
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
-1.0
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010


Labour own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model C - England only + regions
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
-1.0
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010

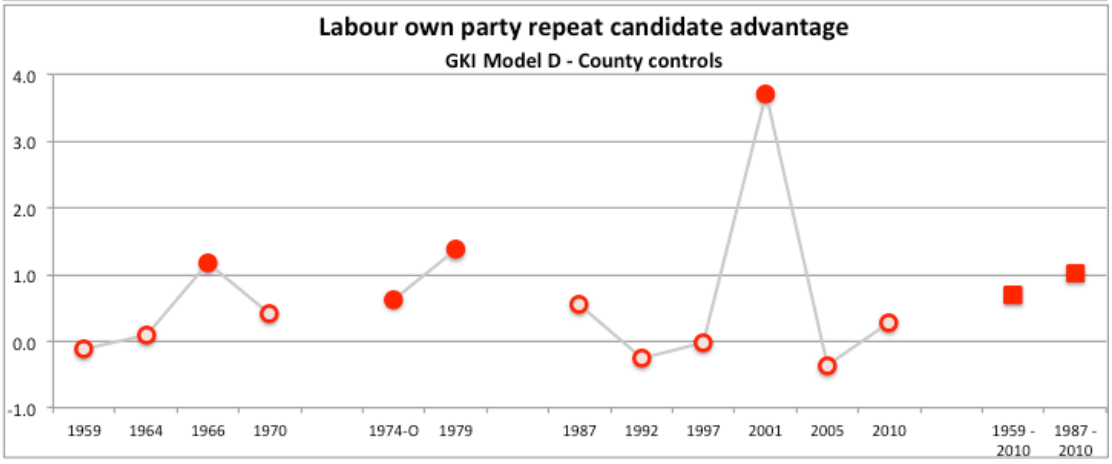

Labour own party repeat candidate advantage
GKI Model D - County controls
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0.0
-1.0
1959
1964
1966
1970
1974-O
1979
1987
1992
1997
2001
2005
2010
1959 - 2010
1987 - 2010

Table 6.11 - Effect of specific votes to MPs performance

The dependent variable is change in conservative / labour vote

Coefficients measure the differential result for MPs who voted differently from their parties

Conservative 2005 Election - Slurge Model

	Section 28		Civil Partnerships		Iraq War	
	Beta	p	Beta	p	Beta	p
Model B	-0.413	0.504	0.169	0.741	0.479	0.527
Model D	-0.497	0.42	-0.124	0.807	-0.681	0.383

Conservative 2010 Election - Slurge Model

	Animal rights		Lisbon Treaty		Abortion	
Model B	-0.348	0.527	-0.352	0.585	-0.325	0.669
Model D	-0.233	0.669	0.014	0.982	-0.003	0.996

Labour 2005 Election - Slurge Model

	Smacking		Top up fees		Iraq War	
Model B	0.097	0.84	-0.06	0.881	-0.168	0.606
Model D	0.04	0.937	-0.039	0.929	0.003	0.992

Labour 2010 Election - Slurge Model

	Animal rights		Lisbon Treaty		Abortion	
Model B	0.303	0.633	1.634	0.097	0.412	0.53
Model D	0.642	0.298	1.08	0.258	0.961	0.14

	Combined	
Model B	1.484**	0.005
Model D	1.776**	0.001

Table 6.12 Incumbency advantage versus polarization and partisan dealignment

Dependent Variable =>	CON GKI A		Con Slurge A		Con Slurge A v Lab	
	Beta	p	Beta	p	Beta	p
Polarization						
Model I	-0.007	0.819	-0.012	0.529	-0.035	0.06
Model II	0.009	0.776	-0.014	0.615	-0.03	0.238
Model III	0.004	0.923	-0.087	0.073	-0.079	0.087
Partisanship						
Model I	0.013	0.78	0.02	0.526	0.028	0.366
Model II	-0.02	0.718	0.018	0.648	0.022	0.523
Model III	-0.034	0.528	-0.045	0.307	-0.033	0.433
Dependent Variable =>	CON GKI B		Con Slurge B		Con Slurge B v Lab	
Polarization						
Model I	-0.007	0.721	-0.01	0.535	-0.024	0.115
Model II	0.016	0.567	-0.07	0.728	-0.012	0.46
Model III	0.006	0.77	-0.7	0.083	-0.049	0.192
Partisanship						
Model I	0.003	0.924	0.011	0.658	0.011	0.678
Model II	-0.031	0.392	0.004	0.875	0.003	0.908
Model III	-0.037	0.182	-0.05	0.204	-0.034	0.368
Dependent Variable =>	LAB GKI A		LAB Slurge A		LAB Slurge A v Lab	
Polarization						
Model I	-0.006	0.779	0.026	0.258	0.025	0.447
Model II	-0.067*	0.023	-0.006	0.896	-0.029	0.665
Model III	-0.086	0.054	0.043	0.571	0.062	0.503
Partisanship						
Model I	0.009	0.687	0.005	0.849	0.022	0.563
Model II	0.021	0.335	0.025	0.336	0.045	0.257
Model III	0.002	0.928	0.031	0.531	0.037	0.532
Dependent Variable =>	LAB GKI B		LAB Slurge B		LAB Slurge B v Lab	
Polarization						
Model I	0.015	0.453	0.043*	0.035	0.049	0.118
Model II	-0.024	0.416	0.035	0.373	0.032	0.619
Model III	-0.021	0.638	0.075	0.283	0.114	0.243
Partisanship						
Model I	-0.01	0.676	-0.016	0.546	-0.008	0.823
Model II	0.002	0.922	0.002	0.922	0.011	0.785
Model III	-0.021	0.468	0.016	0.703	0.014	0.809

Models	Controls added
I	Date
II	Date / Party vote & TO
III	Date / Party vote & TO / GKI or Slurge n / Both variables

Chapter 7 Conclusions and implications

The original aims of the project were to answer a number of questions on incumbency, *What is it? What is its value? Where does it come from, and how has it changed?* The first question is answered in detail in the literature review, the subject has been written about extensively since the 1960s, and thus a significant original contribution to knowledge was never going to come from this question. However, the purpose of this conclusions chapter is show the extent to which the original work in the thesis has been able to answer the latter three. The chapter then goes on to provide a justification of why the thesis is of use to political practitioners and analysts rather than the self-indulgent curiosity of the author.

7.1 Qualitative versus quantitative work

Whilst the centrepiece of the thesis has been quantitative, chapter one provides some original qualitative work outlining some real life examples of where incumbency has made an impact. One of the particularly useful points of this section is that it presents a reminder that there is a considerable degree of variation in outcomes. Whilst the quantitative approach to the subject provides estimates to the value of incumbency for each party at each election, each estimate has its own confidence interval for which 95% or 99% of results would expect to fall within.

The early examples in the chapter, 1.1 – 1.5 Sherwood, Exeter, Yeovil and Finchley have been deliberately selected as they are what one might expect to be classic cases whereby a new incumbent receives a first term surge when they seek re-election for the first time and their party receives a penalty when they later stand down. The Lib Dem vote in Yeovil dropping 4.5% in 2001 on Paddy Ashdown's retirement and then bouncing 7% on David Laws's first time surge in 2005 is exactly the kind of numbers that the study estimates. This is not designed to prove anything, but to provide a real life example.

Section 1.9 outlined the experience of Enoch Powell in Wolverhampton South West from 1950 to his surprise retirement just before the February 1974 election. Both the GKI and slurge estimates for the Conservatives at that election showed that there should be no statistically significant effect from incumbency, and even taking the seven election multi election regression the mean effect of a retirement should have been in the order of half a percent of the vote. Yet the Conservative vote plunged 25%-points from the 1970 notionals on the new boundaries, being by far the worst individual result of the election for the Conservatives. The result was so extreme, and presented such a knock-on for other neighbouring constituencies that it was widely agreed to have been the effect of Powell's personal popularity and high profile withdrawal, even by those such as David Butler, who were known for their scepticism about the power of the personal vote.

Section 1.11 outlined Lembit Opik's experience in Montgomeryshire from 1997 until his defeat at the 2010 election. The estimates for the value of incumbency

for a Liberal Democrat MP at the 2005 and 2010 elections were around 5-7% of the vote, depending on the model, and with all being statistically significant at the 1% level. This significance implies incumbency should be positive in 99% of cases. Yet, despite this, it appeared that not only did the positive incumbency Opik had enjoyed in 2001 and 2005 desert him, that a considerable negative incumbency penalty appeared to have struck him down with his vote falling 13.4%, way out of line with any other result locally, in Wales or anywhere else in the UK with a sitting Lib Dem MP restanding Section 1.8 provides a second possible anecdotal example of a negative incumbency with the Conservatives appearing to outperform on the retirement of Norman St John-Stevas.

As well as providing some extreme examples, which highlight the limitations of using regressions, or indeed simple means, to make generalizations, the qualitative chapter also demonstrates some of the difficulties. Examples 1.12 and 1.13 show how changing demographics and changing boundaries can muddy the waters and make it more difficult to draw inferences from the results. Whilst some of the controls outlined in chapter 5 have mitigated these problems somewhat, a considerable fog of data noise clouds one's ability to use this macro level data to the fullest.

Some of the examples such as 1.10 can show examples of where changes in incumbency actually make a difference in terms of seats changing hands. By forcing the early departure of Renee Short, it is very likely that the Trotskyite led group that forced her out led to the seat flipping over the Conservatives against the national and regional tide in the West Midlands.

7.2 Is incumbency significant?

Here the quantitative work has sought to answer the question in two ways. Firstly, it uses two methodological approaches to quantify the numerical value of incumbency advantage (most logically expressed in terms of share of the vote)[116], over a 14-election cycle. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, whilst there have been numerous attempts at estimating the value of incumbency at one election, or occasionally a series of elections, no other study has used the same consistent methodologies over such a long series. The second manner in which the question has been answered is by looking at the effects on individual seats at specific elections by using the coefficients obtained from the quantitative analysis to estimate what the outcome might have been had either there had been no incumbency advantage, or that there had been no retirements or first term surges.

The study has shown overwhelming evidence that incumbency is a statistically significant factor in election results. Whilst it is by no means the most important cue in a voter's mind, that remains party, but in almost all of the multi election regressions, the coefficients for incumbency for the three parties are positive and significant.[117] At individual elections, with a lower number of '*n*'s, incumbency is almost always positive and significant for Labour and Liberal Democrats, and positive and significant for the Conservatives at the most recent elections.

The question of whether to incumbency advantage materially affects the outcome of general elections is a matter for further debate. Section 6.9 presents unique estimates of how many actual seats might have fallen differently at each election either had there firstly been no incumbency effect, or secondly if no MP had retired or experienced a first time bounce. Whilst there had been a couple of such estimates in the Nuffield Study analyses such as 1979, this is the first time that estimates have been provided for every election in this chain. Whilst incumbency effects would not have been large enough to change an absolute outcome of an election, e.g. a hung parliament instead of a majority, section 6.9 shows that it is possible to see four elections, 1964, the two 1974 elections and 2010, where had the incumbency advantage been zero, the way in which the new Parliament panned out would have been very different, with the possibility of no Lib-Lab pact in 1977 or Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010. The estimations of slurge effects suggest that at least for the two major parties, the effects of retirements and first term incumbency amongst the parties appear to have cancelled themselves out in that there is no election at which we could say, this was lost or outcome affected because one party or other had so many retirements. In fact, there appears to be no material effect to election outcomes over the series, other than providing for a larger Liberal Democrat party after elections following ones in which they picked up seats.

7.3 How does incumbency advantage differ amongst the parties?

The study has shown that incumbency advantage is not equally distributed amongst the parties. Over the period, Labour's incumbency advantage has been larger than the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats have enjoyed an advantage, at least double the size of the two major parties. In the 1959 – 79 series, incumbency advantage was around 0.5% for the Conservatives and around 0.8% for Labour. In the later half, 1983 - 2010, Conservative incumbency advantage averaged around 1%, Labour's just under 2%, and the Lib Dems around 5-8%, there being some difference in estimation between the slurge and GKI methodologies. The multi election regressions for Scotland and Wales show the nationalist parties enjoy incumbency in the same order as those of the Liberal Democrats, of 4 - 8%.

These results ask two additional questions, firstly why Labour has a larger incumbency advantage than the Conservatives, and why the smaller parties enjoy a larger incumbency advantage than the two major parties. The thesis does supply some tentative answers to these questions by looking at the cross-tabs for the effect that incumbency in one party has on the vote shares of the other parties contesting that constituency. Section 6.5 and especially the visualization of the effects of the presence of an incumbent, or slurge effects, on the vote share of the other parties, is particularly useful. In the presence of Liberal Democrat incumbent, the vote shares of the other two parties both drop equally, around 2 to 2.5%, in the presence of a Labour incumbent, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat votes both drop, 0.5% for the Conservatives and 1% for the Liberal Democrats. In the presence of a Conservative incumbent the Liberal Democrat vote drops just over 1%, but the Labour vote change is either insignificant or actually positive and significant. Thus Liberal Democrat

incumbents are successful in attracting partisans of both other parties, as are Labour MPs, but to a lesser extent than the Liberal Democrats, and are more effective at attracting Lib Dems than Conservatives. Conservative incumbents are as effective as Labour at attracting Lib Dem voters, but seem incapable of persuading any Labour supporters to lend them their votes. This suggests that Conservative-minded voters are less inhibited about lending their votes if they like their Labour MP than Labour-minded voters are about supporting a Conservative MP. Voters of both major parties are less inhibited about lending their votes to a Lib Dem incumbent than to the other major party.

Further work would need to be done with individual based survey data to disentangle how much of this is to do with voter inhibitions and how much to do with other factors. The analysis still doesn't rule out the possibility that Liberal Democrats incumbents just do things differently and so voters like them so much more, that more of them are prepared to switch, but intuitively, it makes sense for Labour and Conservative voters to be less worried about voting for a Lib Dem incumbent than one of the other party. A voter inclined to support John Major in 1992 might have liked their Labour incumbent, but balked at the prospect of this meaning effectively voting for Neil Kinnock to be Prime Minister. However, had that same voter had a Liberal Democrat incumbent they liked, they could have voted for them in the safety that they were not voting for a Labour majority. The same logically follows for the Plaid Cymru and the SNP. The third possibility is that the comparative rarity of having a Liberal Democrat or minor party MP gives such members disproportionate coverage in comparison to those of the major parties.

As for the difference between Labour and Conservatives, the evidence points to it being a difference in behaviour between Labour and Conservative voters, especially since the Labour vote actually seems to firm up in some cases in the presence of a Conservative incumbent. The answer may well be about the behaviour of voters rather than the behaviour of MPs.

7.4 How does incumbency differ amongst the nations and regions

The multi election regressions over a series of elections have allowed estimations with a sufficiently large number of cases to test the value of incumbency amongst the individual nations and regions of Great Britain, something that has not been tested in other studies. Scotland and Wales have had four-party systems for much of the period tested with a Nationalist Party winning seats and a disproportionately strong Liberal party relative to the rest of the country. The regressions showed that the two main parties had a weaker incumbency advantage to the rest of the country. The Conservatives had no significant incumbency advantage over the 1983 – 2010 period, whilst Labour, the dominant party in both nations, had a pretty feeble 0.8% incumbency advantage in Scotland, and 2% in Wales around average for GB as a whole.

Section 6.7 looked for patterns amongst the English regions using multi election regressions over the 1983 – 2010 period. What was striking immediately was that the Conservative's largest incumbency advantages had been in their

weakest region of the North East, and also the North West a region in which their position was in relative decline as chapter 4 demonstrates. They did worse than average in Scotland and Wales, but also in two of their strongest regions, in the South West, where their incumbency advantage was insignificant, whilst in their strongest region of all, the South East, it was worth a feeble 0.7%. Meanwhile Labour's incumbency advantage was strongest in its weakest region of the South West at over 4.5%, double its national average, with a relatively strong performance in the South East of 2.2%, an area that was a Labour free zone in the 1983 and in which they only won one seat in 1987. A negative and significant correlation exists for the Conservatives between performance in the region and the value of incumbency advantage.

Section 6.8 also did something that no previous study on incumbency had done by looking for differentials amongst urban and rural seats. The results for Labour are not conclusive, but for the Conservatives there is a clear demonstration that their incumbency advantage does appear to be larger for them in seats in the former metropolitan counties and in Greater London. Over the full 1959 – 2010 series, the GKI estimates show their metropolitan incumbency advantage almost double their rural one, whilst the slurge estimates show it no less than 0.3% points smaller in all three time periods tested.

7.5 How has the value of incumbency changed?

The thesis has shown beyond question that the two major parties have seen the value of their incumbency advantage increase over the 14-election cycle. The difference between the two halves of the full period using multi election regressions is considerable on its own. Incumbency advantage for the Conservatives doubled from 0.5 to 1% and more than doubled for Labour from 0.8% to around 1.8% in the second period. Looking at the results of individual elections there is a clear trend higher, which is picked up by the regressions looking at partisan dealignment and polarization. In these regressions the control variable, time, is significant and positively correlated to the size of the incumbency advantage enjoyed by the two major parties over the period. Thus the thesis has shown that there has been a statistically significant increase over the period.

The results of the data for individual elections suggests that whilst Labour was ahead of the Conservatives in incumbency advantage for most of the period, the last two elections suggest that the Conservatives could have closed the gap with the parties converging at around 2%. Further work on the 2015 and 2017 elections would need to be carried out to assess if it is indeed the case that the Conservatives are catching up, or that these two elections just happened to pick up circumstances, which favoured Conservative incumbency. The results of the regressions in section 6.12 suggests no evidence that the value of incumbency is increased when the parties converge in the centre of the political spectrum as some of the US models appear to show it does there, and therefore the comparative consensus in economic and social policy in 2001 -2010 compared to the polarization of the 1980s was probably not the reason incumbency advantage increased from 1983 to 2010.

7.6 Where might incumbency come from and what has caused the change?

Over the course of the thesis it has become clear to this author that it is not possible to definitively answer this question using macro based election data. Answers to this question are going to have to come from individual level studies. The author looked at questions from the British Election Survey and the Hansard Study of Parliament surveys, but concluded that these did not contain answers to the right questions. It is possible that a bespoke survey might be required designed with the specific intent to answer these questions to find out what causes a certain proportion of voters to put more weight on their preference for their incumbent MP over their otherwise preference for party. The key areas to disaggregate are the extent to which it comes from whether the MP has provided constituency service or help to that voter in particular, the voter's approval of the MPs work or style of representing the constituency, the MP's reputation for hard work in the Commons, or simply name recognition.

Despite the lengthy caveat above, this project does provide evidence that a large component of the incumbency advantage may come from simple name recognition as the Michigan Model first suggested in the early 1960s. The results of section 6.10 on repeat candidates showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the parties' performances in seats where they had a non-incumbent repeat candidate and in other seats in which there was a new challenger. In the multi elections regressions, Conservative and Labour repeat candidates enjoyed a repeat candidate advantage of just under 1% of the vote, almost the same amount as Conservative incumbents and jut over half the value of Labour incumbents. Liberal Democrat repeat candidate advantage was around 1.5%, a much smaller share of the around 7% incumbency advantage estimated in the GKI model.

Particularly for Labour and the Conservatives, the implications of these results is that repeat candidates can do much of what incumbents can do in persuading a small proportion of the electorate who might have voted otherwise, to opt to vote for them. Unlike incumbents, repeat candidates do not have the opportunity to do constituency service[118] or have the platform of the House of Commons to create a reputation. What both almost certainly have in common, is a commitment to fight the electoral battle in the constituency, the names and pictures of both will have been seen in the constituency at election time thus building up a name recognition. Both incumbents and repeat candidacy have a presence in the constituency over perhaps a five year or longer period as the party's key person or representative. Thus what it may boil down to is that a key component of incumbency advantage comes from simply being there and being known, i.e. the Michigan hypothesis of name recognition. The bespoke study suggested in the first paragraph of this section might therefore seek to look at incumbents and repeat candidates together in order to get a more meaningful answer.

The results of regional and metro/non metro area regressions may also provide a clue about incumbency being more potent for one of the major parties if they

are, by a considerable way, the weaker of the two in a given region. The Conservatives in the North East and Labour in the South West are always the weaklings in those two regions and yet enjoy a much larger incumbency advantage than in other regions. It opens the question as whether or example being the sole MP of one party in a region, e.g. Peter Atkinson in the North East ahead of the 2001 and 2005 elections, gives that member additional prominence and therefore an extra boost to incumbency. Regional news programmes tend to be keen to have spokespersons of the both the major parties, if not all three, in order to provide balance to their reports and debates, and thus MPs who are on their own, or part of a very small group in a region are likely to get disproportionate airtime and coverage. This also applies to the Liberal Democrats and Nationalists who were never the majority party in any nation or region, and usually a small minority during the periods of study for this research. [119] Once again this points the finger towards name recognition as a suspect not only for the source incumbency, but also at last a part of the reason for the differential between the parties.

The final area of study about what might have been responsible for the change in incumbency over the period has produced inconclusive results. The regressions testing to see if selected controversial divisions produced an advantage or disadvantage for MPs who voted out of line with the majority of their party found no evidence at all of any of these making any significant impact on performance, even the controversial Iraq War vote. The final regressions in 6.11 for all Labour MPs rebelling on one or more of all three of the controversial issues in the 2005 – 2010 Parliament did find a positive and significant advantage, but this is not enough on its own to do anything other than suggest that additional work might be carried out on MPs who are seen as independent minded outperforming. However, it may be the public's perception of MP rather than the MPs actual record that counts, in which case, individual level data may yield more useful results than macro voting data. It reasonable to conclude that this study has not found strong enough evidence to suggest that an increase in independence of MPs since the 1950s as discussed in chapter 4 is responsible for the increase in the value of incumbency.

The study has also not found any evidence to suggest that it is the decline in partisanship or the decrease in the polarization discussed in chapter 4 that is responsible for the increase in incumbency. The results of the regressions in section 6.12 were that the two factors were insignificant despite three different models, the latter adding in extra controls. The key conclusion is that once one controls for time, the change in partisanship and polarization are not significant and thus should be treated as being coincidental or due to the same underlying change in politics with the process of increasing incumbency advantages rather being amongst its causes.

The question therefore remains what it is that has been responsible for this increase in incumbency advantage. The hypothesis suggested by Norton and Wood (1993) that there has been a new breed of MP with a focus on constituency service, or a change in the behaviour of MPs in general towards this, is certainly a candidate. This is problematic for a project based on macro

data since there is no objective data for the quality or quantity of each MPs constituency service in a given Parliament. Individual level data at a given election could test whether there is a relationship as to whether a voter who feels they have been helped by their MP, or knows someone who has been helped by their MP is more likely to vote for them, but this is likely to require the kind of bespoke survey suggested in 7.3. Even this wouldn't provide firm evidence of the reason for the change since the 1950s and 1960s since there would be no such data in that period against which to compare. Thus, it is unlikely to be possible to give a sure answer as to what is behind the increase in incumbency over the period.

7.7 Comparison with North America

The value of Liberal Democrat MPs' incumbency advantage is on a par with US Members of Congress with their scores of 5-8% being at the top end of what Congress members have achieved over the 1964-2014 period. The data shows clearly that once Liberal Democrat MPs get in, it is very difficult to remove them until they retire.[120] Labour and Conservative incumbency values are nowhere near those of Congress members, the 1% for the Conservatives and 2% for Labour is as low as Members of Congress have achieved in the postwar period. This should not be a great surprise since House elections do not decide the political makeup of the executive, unlike British Parliamentary elections, and so the party cue is always going to be stronger in the UK.

The more logical comparison is with the Canadian House of Commons, which uses the same electoral system and has a comparable two and a half party system along with a strong regional independence movement (see section 2.3.) In comparison to Krashinsky and Milne's (1984,1985) work on Canada, this thesis finds that the two major British parties do less well than their Canadian counterparts the Liberals and Conservatives, with the latter pair enjoying an average incumbency advantage of around 3% from the 1950s to the 1980s and around 5% in 1984. The Lib Dem incumbency advantage of 5-8% is very much comparable to the NDP estimate of 7.4%, adding weight to the tentative conjecture that there could be some value in being a comparative rarity, voters liking the novelty of voting for different option without wasting their vote as discussed in the previous section as applying to the major parties when they are in a minority in a region. However the NDP relative success violates one of the conjectures about the Lib Dems outperforming because of their centrist position. Unlike the Lib Dems, the NDP has always been considerably to the left of the Canadian Liberals.

7.8 Implications and use of the thesis

The first implication for the thesis is for Members of Parliament, it provides the positive message that their efforts are not in vain, for Labour and Conservative MPs, a small but significant section of the electorate will reward them, if nothing else, for their persistence in fighting to be elected in their area at election after election, and maybe also for the work they do for the constituency. Liberal Democrat MPs, although diminished in numbers since the author started this

work, enjoy incumbency advantages as large as members of Congress and once they get in, are very difficult to dislodge. If the party can win by elections as it did in the 1970s, 80s and 90s and then use incumbency to hold the seat at the subsequent elections, this may be the party's strategy for rebuilding its ranks.[121]

The second message is that MPs should not get overexcited about the extent of the value of their incumbency advantage or that it could save them from a really bad election result. This author warned ahead of the 2015 election (Smith, 2015), that even the powerful incumbency advantage of the Liberal Democrats might not be able to save them from a really bad result winning fewer than 20 seats if the polls were right[122]. MP's may also have unrealistic expectations about what the value of incumbency is, Norton & Wood (1993), showed some thought it was as much as 3000 votes, when if one assumes 2% - 2.5% of a 50,000 vote election we are looking at 1,000 to 1,250 votes for the major parties. MPs are also unable to vote their way out of trouble in the House of Commons. The data from section 6.11 is clear that attempting to save themselves by voting against unpopular legislation is not going to work, if the voters were unable or unwilling to discriminate in favour MPs who rebelled against the (by then) unpopular Iraq War at the 2005 election, then it is extremely unlikely that rebel votes on unpopular but probably much more obscure matters is going to help.

The findings of the repeat candidacy section raise questions about the constituency service aspect of the MP's role. The fact that there is no statistical difference in the bonuses that repeat incumbent and non-incumbent Conservative candidates receive implies that the work in the constituency the former do, and in particular, constituency service, goes unrewarded by the voters. Labour incumbents enjoy a better bonus than repeat candidates, of around 1% more than the latter, but this represents a very limited upside for what constituency service *could* be worth, assuming that this 1% is not caused by something else. MPs clearly think that constituency service is important and the literature review shows how since the 1950s, they have taken on vast amounts of extra work. The literature review also shows that MPs in more marginal constituencies do more such work, and send more correspondence than those in safe seats. MPs might decide that they feel it is their duty to perform such functions, but there is strong evidence that they feel it can help them electorally. If this is not the case, it raises questions as to whether they could spend more time on select committee, executive scrutiny and legislative work instead. Secondly, if constituency service does not produce electoral rewards for politicians, might they consider transferring it to Scandinavian style ombudsmen?

Parties might want to take note about incumbency, repeat candidacy and party management. An unpublished Conservative candidate selection guidance document seen by this author implored constituency associations not to worry about selecting mature candidates saying it would "be better to have a good MP for ten years, than a mediocre MP for twenty years". Whilst high minded, that might not be such a good plan if the average tenure of MPs dropped, since a larger proportion of seats previously held by the party would be fought without

an incumbency advantage, or with a retirement penalty (depending on how one looks at it), at each election. Parties might also be wise to try to persuade incumbents to restand at elections in which they thought the party might be in trouble. The greater the number of incumbents retiring in seats in the 'at risk' range, the worse the result is likely to be. Tessa Jowell noted this after the 2010 election, that the Labour Party had not worked hard enough to persuade incumbents to continue and that she felt that this had cost them seats. On the other hand, parties could consider pressuring elderly MPs likely to be close to retirement anyway, or those they judged as being lacklustre performers to stand down early if they are certain that the swing is likely to be large enough in their direction that no seats would be lost against the tide, and that it would be a good election to get people out of the way.[123]

Management of repeat candidates in key seats should also be a consideration for the parties. As section 2.5.2 which outlined some of the candidate selection issues explained, there is something of an expectation that if candidates fight an unwinnable or marginal seat a couple of times, they may be rewarded with being selected for a very safe seat in which they could expect to hold for 20 years or more. Parties might want to persuade candidates who had a near miss in a marginal seat to give it another go in order to maximize the chance of winning. This could be considered something of a 'big ask' to the candidate who faces the opportunity, with an unknown, but at probably least some likelihood, of finding a safe seat, in exchange for up to five more years hard slog as the candidate in their marginal. Whilst candidates who are genuinely local to the seat might be willing to do this, it could be a difficult one to enforce. However, the parties could increase the number of repeat candidates by eschewing an urge to force all previous candidates to re-apply for membership of their party's approved list.

Finally, the way in which incumbency is understood by the media has changed during the course of this thesis. One of the reasons why this author chose to write the thesis was as a response to the 2010 election in what seemed to be very obvious evidence of the importance of incumbency was largely ignored. Coverage of the election occasionally mentioned that the Conservatives were doing very much better in their target seats in which their Labour or Liberal Democrat opponents were standing down. However first term surge effects where some Labour MPs who were restanding for the first time, such as Sadiq Khan and Emily Thornberry, who would have lost on a uniform swing, and whom were nonetheless re-elected, the latter increasing her majority, were completely missed by media coverage.

Coverage of the 2015 election contained considerably more mentions of incumbency particularly on the Liberal Democrats with some commentators claiming the party wouldn't lose as many seats as expected given their incumbency advantages. However, this is a misunderstanding of what incumbency effects actually do. If the MP has been sitting for more than one term, their incumbency advantage will be fully baked in, and so if there is a big swing against their party, it might not necessarily save them, unless there was a secular change in the value of incumbency between one election and another. The specific point about first term bonus was also not disaggregated from a

general point about incumbency with some honourable exceptions such as Kellner (2014) who pointed out that the unusually large number of first term Conservative MPs restanding for the first time could make it much harder for Labour to regain seats at the 2015 election.

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NOTES
NOTES
Chapter 1
Chapter 1

[1] When compared to the national (GB) result, the finding is the same
[2] Again this is mirrored when compared to the national result, the finding is the same
[2] Again this is mirrored when compared to the national result
[3] Section 5.2 explains in detail the sources of the data
[4] Over the 2005 notionals on the new boundaries
[5] The national result was a more appropriate benchmark given the Liberals were usually in second place in the South West region
[6] The answer based on the analysis in later chapters is probably no, but had the constituency been fought on the 2005 boundaries then it would probably have been held due to Bradshaw's incumbency.
[7] The threshold for a lost deposit was 12.5% until the 1987 election, when it dropped to 5%, but with a higher 500-GBP charge.
[8] As defined by its 1965 boundaries, thus including Finchley in 1955 -1964 when it was still part of Middlesex.

[9] Other examples of victory after multiple attempts in the same seat include Michael Ward, forth attempt, [Peterborough October 1974], Vernan Coaker, third attempt [Gedling 1997], Mark Reckless [Rochester and Strood 2010].
[10] The other seat Wolverhampton SE was named Bilston 1955-1970
[11] along with another MP Joan Maynard
[12] The second largest swing in Merthyr Tydfil 14%, was due to the fact that a rebel Labour MP S.O.Davies, who had won as an independent in 1970, but died during the Parliament.
[13] The BBC/ITV election
[14] A handful of candidates have been elected as independent Conservative / Labour / Unionist etc., having been an incumbent member for that party and then subsequently leaving. Martin Bell (Tatton 1997-2001) is another rare example of a genuine independent

Chapter 2

[15] He obtained the list of constituencies before the election in order to avoid ex post facto rationalization
[16] In almost all states voters must register as Republican, Democrat or independent voters
[17] The term comes from the fact that second year students at US Universities are known as "sophomores"
[18] The former Confederate States and border states were solidly Democrat during this period, and operated under completely different 'third party system.' (Jacobson 2000)
[19] KRASHINSKY, M. & MILNE, W. J. 1983. SOME EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECT OF INCUMBENCY IN ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. *Canadian Journal of Political Science-Revue Canadienne De Science Politique,* 16**,** 489-500., KRASHINSKY, M. & MILNE, W. J. 1985a. ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECT OF INCUMBENCY IN CANADIAN ELECTIONS. *Canadian Journal of Political Science-Revue Canadienne De Science Politique,* 18**,** 155-165, KRASHINSKY, M. & MILNE, W. J. 1985b. INCREASING INCUMBENCY. *Canadian Public Policy-Analyse De Politiques,* 11**,** 107-110, KRASHINSKY, M. & MILNE, W. J. 1986. THE EFFECT OF INCUMBENCY IN THE 1984 FEDERAL AND 1985 ONTARIO ELECTIONS. *Canadian Journal of Political Science-Revue Canadienne De Science Politique,* 19**,** 337-343.
[20] from the 1992 notional results on the new boundaries
[21] Their vote decline 6.4% in constituencies with 1 – 5% Muslims and 8.1% in constituencies with 5 to 10% Muslims
[22] On 2005 results after boundary changes
[23] The authors state a list of criterion such as the size of the claims amount that had to be repaid
[24] Different treatment of boundary changes, by election wins etc.
[25] adjusted mean
[26] He discusses similar literature as in the previous section
[27] All bar one newly elected 1979 Labour MP were elected in seats which the party had held at the previous election
[28] based on the British Candidates Survey whether incumbents were more focused on average on constituency work
[29] based on answers to BCS questions determining whether candidates/incumbents were radical or moderate
[30] before eventually finding safe seats elsewhere
[31] The amount was increased to £500 in 1985, but the threshold reduced to 5%.
[32] Since 1992, the other deselected Conservative MPs, including George Gardiner, Nick Hawkins and Anne MacIntosh were removed due to political or personal disputes with their associations (Wallace, 2014), or like Howard Flight and Sir Peter Viggers, who were removed directly by the leadership.
[33] and indeed Congress members
[34] Cabinet Minister who stood down in 1979 and whose London seat fell to the Conservatives.
[35] Like Cain Ferejohn, and Fiorina's "Mr R"
[36] A dissenting or rebel vote is defined as a vote against the party whip, a cross-vote is defined as one cast against the whips in which the two parties divide against one another with the whips applied on both sides – NORTON, P. 1987. DISSENT IN THE BRITISH-HOUSE-OF-COMMONS - REJOINDER. *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 12**,** 143-152. p.146
[37] The Treaty of Brussels
[38] None of the 19 regular rebels in the EC Bill faced any serious threat to reselection NORTON, P. 2011. Divided Loyalties: The European Communities Act 1972. *Parliamentary History,* 30**,** 53-64.

Chapter 3

[39] A number of institutions including New Republic rate Congress members and Senators by analysing their roll-call votes.
[40] Goldwater proved an extremely unpopular candidate, losing to Johnson by a landslide
[41] Americans for Democratic Action, a left leaning pressure group which rates Congress members by roll-call votes on a left-right basis
[42] Defined as being in favour of Enoch Powell's hard-line views on immigration
[43] As it turned out two more elections, 2015 and 2017 elections were indeed fought on these out of date boundaries
[44] (such as the aforementioned Congressman Natcher)
[45] (e.g. the incumbent re-stands)

Chapter 4

[46] The BNP imploded between 2010 and 2015 and won fewer votes than the Monster Raving Loony Party
[47] for this purpose the Speaker as being part of the two-party system since Speaker Bercow counts as a Conservative in sharing out the four Speaker / Deputy Speaker positions in the House, none of whom, by convention, vote.
[48] Generally those who have at some point won MPs or stood in > 100 constituencies. The eccentric Natural Law Party has been ignored.
[49] indicates the National Front until 1983 and the BNP thereafter.
[50] The Green Party was called the Ecology Party at the 1979 – 1987 elections
[51] which demanded a referendum on the UK's EU Membership
[52] Except in 2005, when the number of Scottish seats was reduced by 13
[53] So for example Finchley in Middlesex 1955 and Barnet in Hertfordshire are included in the London total throughout the period.
[54] and indeed in the South West the Liberal Democrats who were second.
[55] On its constant 1965 boundaries
[56] Merseyside excluding the Wirral boroughs which had the Speaker sitting in one of its constituency
[57] on constant boundaries – Sutton Coldfield is included for the whole period.
[58] Which is not part of the City of Birmingham
[59] Working class voting for Socialist or Social Democrats and Middle classes voting for Conservative-Liberal / bourgeois parties
[60] e.g. Protestant voters in Liverpool or Glasgow favoring the Conservatives or minority Catholic voters in The Netherlands largely block voting for a party claiming to represent their interests
[61] Rab Butler and Hugh Gaitskell, the Chancellor and shadow in the 1951-55 Parliament
[62] One of the pitfalls of doing a part time PhD over a number of years is that circumstances change. Towards the end of the thesis Jeremy Corbyn's experiment with a renewed move to the left, as well as Brexit, has led to a renewed period of polarization. This last period will not be included in this thesis.
[63] The UK fell behind most of the rest of Western Europe in output per head
[64] Volkens, Andrea / Lehmann, Pola / Matthieß, Theres / Merz, Nicolas / Regel, Sven / Weßels, Bernhard (2017): The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR). Version 2017b. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB). https://doi.org/10.25522/manifesto.mpds.2017b
[65] Other experimental indexes were tested with similar results, or ones which showed labour slightly further to the right.
[66] Opinion pollsters started to measure voters left-right perceptions of the party leaders ahead of the 2005 election.
[67] This is discussed further in the literature review and methodologies chapters.

Chapter 5

[68] 15 prior to 1950
[69] Between 1885 and 1950 all multi member borough constituencies had two members and voters each had two votes, the top two winning were elected.

[70] Additionally the changes before the 2005 election in Scotland. The emergency change in dividing Milton Keynes for the 1992 election is tacked by excluding the new constituencies.
[71] Or at least the names such that a 1,0 field could be created
[72] e.g. Krashinsky & Milne
[73] it would mean a dummy variable for Conservative won seat, Labour won seat, LD won seat, SNP won seat etc.
[74] At the 1983 election, where there were nineteen such cases, most Conservatives due to boundary changes and Labour due to de-selections.
[75] There are a large number of exclusions, which will be explained.
[76] The anonymous reviewer of SMITH, T. H. 2013. Are you sitting comfortably? Estimating incumbency advantage in the UK: 1983-2010-A research note. *Electoral Studies,* 32**,** 167-173.
[77] Occasionally seats in new towns such as Milton Keynes grew so quickly they were subdivided from one into two constituencies with little or no additional territory required.
[78] For example, the seat of Loughborough created for the 1983 election was not considered the successor seat to the seat with the same name that existed in 1979
[79] There was a consideration to exclude the new constituencies, but this made no material difference to the results.
[80] A second Liberal MP retired in 1970, but is no counted as a retirement since he only served one term. Since he was not the incumbent in 1966 it would be wrong to look for an incumbency bonus rolling off.
[81] Two died, two stood down from 1955 – 1983.
[82] The turnout coefficients were individually insignificant.
[83] That are used the regression, not excluded
[84] As defined in 1994, this applies for the entire period
[85] There are a few cases in which pre 1973 seats straddle new county boundaries, in which case the county of seat considered to be the successor seat is taken as the county for that seat prior to 1973.
[86] It perhaps should be noted that the Liberal leader Jo Grimond protested vigorously to the term 'intervention' when it was used in election coverage, but it is not meant as a loaded term in this context.
[87] UKIP candidates averaged 4% in 2010, but this was an unusual exception. A study of the 2015 election in which UKIP candidates averaged over 12% of the vote would need a considerable adjustment.
[88] Or successor seat
[89] The slurge 'n's. For the GKI model, the number used is the difference between incumbents standing at election t and the number of (non excluded) seats the party held at election t-1, the GKI 'n's.

Chapter 6

[90] One of the comparatively few Conservative retirees was Sir Alex Douglas Hume, whose constituency was then lost to the SNP.
[91] Three formally SDP MPs did not join the Liberal Democrats, David Owen retired, whilst Rosie Barnes and John Cartwright were defeated, and all three seats were lost back to Labour.
[92] The authors even suggested a hypothesis that the fact that many of the Tory seats held in 1997 were ones which had been super-safe before 1997, and that after 1997, with majorities cut to those of marginal seat levels, surviving incumbents changed their behaviour.
[93] Once the SDP defectors and by elections were removed, all the Liberal first termers and retirees were in Scotland/Wales
[94] As discussed in section 5, both parties made major breakthroughs in early 1970s and chose to stand almost everywhere in their respective nations. The SNP won 11 seats in the October 1974 election, their highest total in the 1959 – 2010 series.
[95] For the major parties the usual models are used GB-wide, with C being England only, for the Nationalists the regressions are Scotland and Wales only, respectively.
[96] The usual practice has been to start with the Conservatives, but the Labour one is much more straightforward to explain and so the order has been reversed.
[97] 1983 – 2010 only
[98] The coefficient for all four models are insignificant in 2001
[99] Slurge for the Lib Dems is not used in the England only model for 1983
[100] As per the national the results in 6.3

[101] Although the three regions in which Labour is affected are the Lib Dems strongest ones of the South West, Scotland and the South East
[102] These are London, Strathclyde, Lothian, Glamorgan and the English metropolitan counties that were created in 1973, and although losing their county tier in 1986 continue to have Lords Lieutenant.
[103] The metropolitan counties and Greater London did not exist in 1955, but the seats are placed into their future counties, which are kept constant for the whole period.
[104] Thus there might have been a Scottish Assembly in 1979 had there been no 40% threshold clause inserted into the referendum legislation.
[105] This estimate is lower than the one the Nuffield Study presented in 1979, but they considered those elected for the first time in both 1974 elections as effectively first term incumbents.
[106] Labour's was in fact a de-selection of the veteran pro-Soviet MP Renee Short by Trotskyites.
[107] After their regain of Tatton from an independent MP who did not fight the seat again
[108] Additional regressions were done to confirm this
[109] Henry Bellingham (NW Norfolk) and Bob Spink (Castle Point)
[110] All regions and sub regions saw a swing from Conservative to Labour.
[111] Jim Knight in South Dorset
[112] Models A to D have the same findings for significance for all elections
[113] In fact the margins were just 12 and 130 votes.
[114] Liberal Democrat third time repeat candidate's average share of the vote on their second attempt was just 18% in 2001 and 24% in 2005, suggesting most were in unwinnable seats.
[115] Additional tests looking at three time candidates in 1992 also found no significance.

Chapter 7

[116] Number of votes does not work since there is such considerable variation in constituency size and turnout
[117] Three of the four models for Labour 1959 – 79 have insignificant coefficients, the other 45 multi election regressions for the two major parties and all the 1983 – 2010 Lib Dem ones are all significant
[118] It is possible repeat candidates could be councillors, but this is true of non-repeat candidates
[119] Until the 2015 election which falls outside the scope of the regressions
[120] This was somewhat shaken by the party's exsanguination in 2015 when their national vote dropped by two-thirds, but incumbency appeared to have saved the party from an almost complete wipe-out.
[121] There has already been one by election example, Sarah Olney in Richmond who over-turned a more than 20,000 Conservative majority from the 2015 election in a 2016 by election and then came within 50 votes of holding it at the snap 2017 election.
[122] The bookmakers and pundits were generally predicting 30-35 from 57, they ended up with just eight seats.
[123] E.g. it was near certain prior to the election that there would be swings to Labour in 1992 and 1997, and to the Conservatives in 1979, 2005 and 2010.