

Do Corrupt Politicians Mobilize or Demobilize Voters? A Vignette Experiment in Colombia

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Abstract

The literature studying the behavioral effects of political corruption is rapidly growing. While some studies explore the contextual and institutional factors that can neutralize the effects of corruption, this article explores a different mechanism for weak electoral accountability for corruption: citizen (de)mobilization. We use a vignette experiment embedded in a nationally representative AmericasBarometer survey in Colombia to better isolate the causal effect of political corruption on electoral participation. Our results suggest that receiving credible information about the corrupt behavior of politicians running for office depresses participation in elections. We also show that corruption demobilizes voters even when corrupt politicians are able to bring pork to their constituencies, which casts doubts on the idea that citizens exchange integrity for favorable policy outcomes.

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The literature studying the behavioral effects of political corruption is rapidly growing. Since many corrupt incumbents do not receive an electoral sanction, the focus of scholarly work in this area has been to identify the individual-level and the contextual factors that facilitate (or deter) accountability for political corruption (for good reviews of this literature see de Sousa & Moriconi, 2013; De Vries & Solaz, 2017).

By comparison, we know much less about the impact of corruption on turnout. The conceptual framework developed by Hirschman (1970) in his seminal treatise is useful to think about the possible consequences of elected officials' malfeasance on electoral participation. According to Hirschman, members of an organization have two possible responses in the face of unsatisfactory situations or outcomes: they can *exit* (leaving without trying to fix things); or they can *voice* (speaking up and trying to remedy the defects). In the same vein, voters faced with a corrupt political environment might lose trust in political institutions and become more apathetic; or they might decide to go to the polls on Election Day in order to "throw the rascals out."

The few existing studies analyzing the effect of political malfeasance on electoral participation focus on different forms of corruption at different regional levels –municipality, region, and country–, and reach divergent conclusions. We therefore need more empirical work to precisely estimate the impact of a corrupt political class on citizens' propensity to vote. This article uses a vignette experiment embedded in a nationally representative survey in Colombia to better isolate the causal effect of political corruption on electoral participation. Our results suggest that receiving credible information about the corrupt behavior of politicians running for office depresses participation in elections. We also show that corruption demobilizes voters even when corrupt politicians are able to bring pork to their constituencies, which casts doubts on the idea that citizens trade off integrity for favorable policy outcomes (Rundquist, Strom, & Peters, 1977).

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we review the existing literature on the link between corruption and electoral participation. Building on that discussion, our second section presents our arguments and hypotheses. Third, we describe the vignette experiment we

conducted in Colombia to test the effect of corrupt politicians on citizens' propensity to turn out on Election Day. The penultimate section presents the results of the survey experiment. The final section discusses some of the key implications of our findings and concludes.

Political Corruption and Turnout: Review of the Literature

Previous research on the impact of corruption on electoral participation has generated different theoretical expectations and quite different findings. Several studies report that turnout declines in more corrupt regions or countries (Stockemer, LaMontagne, & Scruggs, 2013; Sundström & Stockemer, 2015). Other studies similarly show that citizens who perceive high levels of corruption are less likely to participate in elections (Caillier, 2010; Dahlberg & Solevid, 2016; Davis, Ai Camp, & Coleman, 2004). On the contrary, other scholars show that electoral participation is boosted when incumbents are involved in a corruption scandal (Escaleras, Calcagno, & Shughart, 2012; Karahan, Coats, & Shughart, 2006; Stockemer & Calca, 2013). Yet other studies find no relationship whatsoever between corruption and turnout (Pattie & Johnston, 2012; Peters & Welch, 1980). The present paper contributes to this literature by analyzing whether respondents who are exposed to a corruption treatment in a randomized vignette experiment are more (or less) likely to participate in elections.

Previous studies have undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of the link between corruption and electoral participation. However, we contend that part of the reason that the literature has reached different conclusions about this relationship is that corruption is measured and conceptualized in different ways by different scholars. Some studies analyze the effect of *systemic corruption* on aggregate levels of turnout at the national level. Other works assess the impact of visible *corruption scandals* affecting incumbent politicians on aggregate electoral participation at the subnational level. Yet other studies focus on the impact of *perceptions of corruption* on the likelihood of turning out to vote at the individual level.

Although these different works fall within the broad umbrella of studies analyzing the relationship between corruption and turnout, the different operationalizations of corruption observed in the literature are by no means equivalent. *Ceteris paribus*, it is perfectly reasonable to expect low levels of electoral participation in very corrupt political systems because citizens

might feel that their votes do not make a difference when the different parties are perceived as equally corrupt. On the other hand, a corrupt incumbent in a relatively clean environment might generate a boost in participation in order to sanction the corrupt politician.

The different studies above also have research designs that create unique challenges for the identification of a causal effect of corruption on electoral participation. The works analyzing the effect of perception of corruption on citizens' propensity to vote are problematic for causal inference because perceptions of corruption are correlated with other factors, such as partisanship and trust in institutions (see Anduiza, Gallego, & Muñoz, 2013; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Wagner, Tarlov, & Vivyan, 2014; Wroe, Allen, & Birch, 2013), which might also be related to the outcome of interest (i.e. the decision to go to the polls on Election Day). The literature focusing on the effect of corruption scandals on turnout poses a different set of challenges for establishing causal inference. Corrupt incumbent politicians might spend more money and efforts during their campaigns to try to clean their images and because they value the rents that come from their offices (Escaleras et al., 2012; Karahan et al., 2006). Moreover, corrupt incumbents are also likely to be challenged by more qualified opponents (Hirano & Snyder, 2012), which might mobilize opposition voters. In other words, the increase in turnout observed by some studies in districts with corrupt incumbents might not be a direct result of corruption, but might be linked to the political reverberations of a corruption scandal. Finally, the causal effect of corruption on turnout is also hard to detect in works analyzing the impact of systemic corruption on aggregate turnout. As it has been amply documented, the most corrupt countries are also less developed, have broader governance problems, and have poor and restricted media systems (Blake & Morris, 2009; Chowdhury, 2004; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Treisman, 2007). In sum, it is challenging to isolate the impact of systemic political corruption from these other factors which might also affect turnout.

The present study builds on the previous literature but we try to overcome some of the limitations mentioned in the previous paragraphs. First, we define very precisely the scope of our research. We seek to assess whether corrupt politicians mobilize or demobilize the electorate. In other words, does credible information about the corrupt behavior of a politician running for office make citizens more or less likely to vote in a future election? While it is interesting and

important to analyze the effect of systemic corruption on electoral participation, we do not directly address that question in this paper.

Second, we use a vignette experiment embedded in a nationally representative survey in Colombia to better capture the causal effect of corruption on electoral participation. Survey experiments have been used repeatedly in recent years to evaluate the effects of corruption on vote choice and accountability (Banerjee, Green, McManus, & Pande, 2014; Botero, Castro Cornejo, Gamboa, Pavao, & Nickerson, 2015; Klašnja & Tucker, 2013; Weitz-Shapiro & Winters, 2017), but to our knowledge this is the first vignette experiment assessing whether corrupt incumbents influence electoral participation in the first place. By using an experimental design, which manipulates information about the level of corruption of a legislative candidate while holding constant all other aspects of the electoral context, we are able to evaluate, in a way that eliminates endogeneity concerns, the effect of corrupt politicians on citizens' propensity to vote in a future election.

Theory: Corrupt Candidates and Electoral Participation

The key argument in this paper is that citizens are less likely to go to the polls on Election Day when they receive information about corrupt activities involving a prominent politician running for elected office. The 'de-mobilization' argument is predicated upon the idea that corruption generates dissatisfaction with political institutions, which in turn leads to a withdrawal from the political arena. Warren (2004) argues that corruption signals a deficit of democracy, which can lead to a decline in political participation. Several studies have indeed shown in a variety of different geographical contexts that citizens who perceive high levels of corruption and citizens living in very corrupt environments are more likely to be disenchanted with political institutions and to report lower levels of regime support (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Bowler & Karp, 2004; Chang & Chu, 2005; Seligson, 2002a). Political dissatisfaction associated with perceptions of corruption can result in political apathy (Bauhr & Grimes, 2014). For instance, Stockemer et al. (2013) argue that "if local, regional, or national representatives cannot be trusted because they demand bribes and engage in discrimination, then citizens may have little to no incentive to interact with their elected officials." Low levels of political trust are also associated with a decline in political efficacy. Citizens who perceive high levels of

malffeasance in public officials are more likely to lose confidence in their government's willingness and ability to solve problems (Caillier, 2010; Inman & Andrews, 2009; Olsson, 2014).

Low trust in political institutions and low efficacy may in turn lead to lower levels of electoral participation. A series of scholars argue that participation within conventional institutional channels may decline when citizens become disenchanted with political institutions and with democratic performance (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2016; Norris, 2002: 30). Studies from Bolivia (Smith, 2009), Costa Rica (Seligson, 2002b) and Germany (Finkel, 1987) have demonstrated that citizens with higher levels of political trust are more likely to vote and to participate in campaign activities. In the same vein, Grönlund and Setälä (2007) show that regime legitimacy is positively correlated with electoral participation in 22 European countries examined in the European Social Survey (2002–2003). They conclude that “there is a clear and linear relationship between trust in parliament and turnout as well as satisfaction with democracy and turnout” (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007: 418). Cox (2003) reaches a similar conclusion in her study of the determinants of voter turnout in European Parliament elections. In a similar vein, previous research has established that low political efficacy has a negative effect on political participation (Finkel, 1985). In particular, citizens who do not feel efficacious are less likely to go to the polls on Election Day (Karp & Banducci, 2008; Norris, 2002). In sum, if clear evidence of corruption generates political disenchantment and decreases political efficacy, it can lead by ricochet to a more passive citizenry.

While we contend that corrupt politicians have a negative effect on citizens' electoral participation, some scholars argue just the opposite. The ‘mobilization’ argument contends that political corruption should generate ‘indignation’ (Bauhr & Grimes, 2014) and boost turnout. This is quite simply an accountability argument, which holds that when citizens are faced with corrupt incumbents they are more likely to go to the polls to ‘throw the rascals out.’ Corruption generates dissatisfaction with incumbent politicians, and citizens go the polls to sanction elected officials involved in corruption scandals (Inman & Andrews, 2009; Kostadinova, 2009). There are, however, good reasons to doubt this argument. First, previous studies showing a positive relationship between corruption and turnout ascribe this effect not to citizens' reactions to the corrupt behavior of political incumbents, but to the fact that corrupt politicians might value their

positions more and therefore spend more money and efforts in electioneering (Escaleras et al., 2012; Karahan et al., 2006). These mobilization efforts might in turn generate a small boost in turnout, especially if voters are not well informed about the malfeasance of elected officials. Second, the literature studying the impact of corruption on accountability suggests that corrupt incumbents receive only a small electoral sanction, if they are punished at all (Chang, Golden, & Hill, 2010; Choi & Woo, 2010; Dimock & Jacobson, 1995; Pattie & Johnston, 2012; Peters & Welch, 1980). These findings are hard to reconcile with the ‘mobilization’ argument, and they suggest that visible corruption scandals affecting incumbent politicians should “quash the hope” rather than “inspire the fight” (Chong, De La O, Karlan, & Wantchekon, 2015). The main hypothesis of this paper follows from this discussion.

Hypothesis 1: Citizens’ propensity to vote decreases when they receive credible information about the corrupt behavior of prominent politicians running for elected office.

Our vignette experiment also manipulates the amount of pork that the politician (a governor in Colombia) brings into the region. A subsidiary argument we develop in this section is that the negative effect of corruption on electoral participation should be less pronounced when political leaders are able to deliver public goods and services to their constituencies. In a seminal article, Rundquist et al. (1977) postulate that there is an “implicit trading” between voters and politicians. When politicians deliver good policy results in areas that people care about, citizens tend to discount corrupt behavior (Carlin, Love, & Martínez-Gallardo, 2015; Fernández-Vázquez, Barberá, & Rivero, 2016). In fact, previous research using survey data from Latin America and Africa has shown that corruption exerts a more negative effect on executive approval and political trust when economic conditions are bad (Manzetti & Wilson, 2006; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013) and when the quality of public services is poor (Lavallée, Razafindrakoto, & Roubaud, 2008). If people exposed to corrupt politicians are less likely to lose political trust when these politicians are perceived as good administrators, it follows that the negative effect of the corruption treatment on electoral participation should be smaller when corrupt political leaders deliver public goods and services to their constituencies. This discussion yields the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The delivery of public goods (pork) to the constituency should reduce the negative effect that a corrupt politician has on electoral participation.

Research Design: A Survey Experiment in Colombia

To evaluate the effect of corruption on electoral participation we embedded an experimental vignette in a nationally representative survey in Colombia conducted between August and October of 2016 as part of the biannual AmericasBarometer survey. We chose to run the experiment in Colombia because it is a country with moderately high levels of corruption, which means that our treatment would be perceived as realistic by survey respondents. Data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer show that an overwhelming 80% of Colombians believe that corruption was “very generalized” or “somewhat generalized” in the country. Also, 62% of Colombians believe that corruption in the public sector is “very common”, a percent that largely surpasses the Latin American average of 44%. Finally, Colombia ranks 4th among 21 countries in the Western Hemisphere in terms of the percentage of people that spontaneously declared corruption is the most serious problem affecting their country.¹

The experimental design randomly varied the record of corruption of a hypothetical candidate running for congress, as well as the candidate’s record of goods provision during his prior gubernatorial administration.² The corruption conditions were three: one group received a vignette that makes no mention of the candidate’s record of corruption; another was treated with a vignette in which the congressional candidate was accused by a credible source (an international anti-corruption commission) for evidence of bribe taking during his tenure as governor, and a third group learned from the same source that the candidate was praised for an honest administration during his tenure as governor. The conditions for the candidate’s level of effectiveness in delivering public works were two: One group was exposed to a “better than average” goods provision candidate, and another group was exposed to a “worse than average” goods provision candidate.³ The different versions of the vignette experiment are described in Table 1.

¹ Data from the 2014 AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project.

² All demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, place of residence) are balanced across treatment groups. Table A1 in the Appendix reports the T-test results which show that there is no statistically significant difference in these sociodemographic characteristics between the different treatment groups.

³ The experimental design also included an additional treatment condition. We designed a flyer that informed half of the respondents about how generalized perceptions of corruption are in the country

[Table 1 about here]

Our research design is different from previous experimental studies in that it evaluates the effect of corruption involving a legislative candidate, instead of a mayoral or gubernatorial candidate. Extant research focuses mostly on subnational authorities because it relies on actual information released by audit institutions, but here we rely on a hypothetical candidate accused by an international anticorruption organization in order to prevent possible confounding effects caused by real candidates involved in corruption scandals. And we hold the source of the information stable, attributing it to an international organization as a way to guard against less trustworthy national sources (Botero et al., 2015).

The prior gubernatorial experience serves two additional purposes related to the Colombian political framework. First, it makes the corruption treatment more credible, as governors in Colombia control a sizable amount of public funds which makes them more vulnerable to accusations of corruption⁴; and second, it makes the politician a viable candidate for congress, as deputies in Colombia tend to have strong political connections with subnational politics (Ingall & Crisp, 2001). Our experimental design is also realistic given the institutional framework of Colombia. In this South American country, governors are not allowed to run for reelection. Hence, many governors decide to run for Congress after the end of their terms. In other words, the characteristics of this vignette allow us not only to explore corruption effects for a previously understudied type of public official in the experimental literature (i.e. a legislative candidate), but also to ensure the validity of the hypothetical situation within the political context of Colombia.

Following the vignette, we measured a series of attitudinal outcomes, among which we recorded each respondent's reported likelihood of casting a vote in the following elections. Respondents were asked: "*how likely, in a 1-7 scale, are you to vote in the following legislative elections?*". We used this variable to evaluate the extent to which reported turnout is affected by our corruption treatment. To facilitate data analysis, we transformed the turnout variable to a scale of 0-100, where greater numbers represent higher likelihood of turnout.

(perception treatment). That treatment is not central to the research question investigated in this paper, and its effects will be investigated elsewhere.

⁴ On intergovernmental transfers in Colombia see Pening Gaviria (2003) and Gil Ospina & Martínez Jaramillo (2007).

Results

Table 2 presents the average treatment effect of corruption on electoral participation. Using a re-scaled 0-100 variable for the likelihood of turnout, we find that the average reported turnout is 52.61 for respondents who receive the “corrupt candidate” treatment, 59.01 for respondents in the control group, and 63.96 for respondents who receive the “honest candidate” treatment. That is, respondents that randomly received an honest candidate vignette reported the highest turnout, and respondents that were exposed to a corrupt candidate vignette reported the lowest. When we compare a corrupt candidate to an honest one, turnout declines 11.35 points (p -value <0.01), and when we compare a corrupt candidate to a control one turnout is reduced by 6.40 points (p -value <0.01). The statistically significant differences in means suggest that citizens who receive credible information about the corrupt behavior of politicians running for elected office are considerably less likely to vote on Election Day.

[Table 2 about here]

Now, we use a series of regressions that take into account the weighting and clustering of the survey design and any additional clustering in the data structure. Also, to mitigate any concerns about an unsuccessful randomization, we include three sociodemographic variables (age, sex, and education) as controls. Table 3 reports the coefficient estimates of corruption for twelve model specifications predicting turnout. Models 1-3 are linear regressions using a 0 to 100 scaled dependent variable and clustering standard errors at the municipal level. Models 4-6 are linear regressions taking into account the survey weighting and sampling. Models 7-9 are multilevel regression models with random effects specified at the municipal level. Finally, models 10-12 are ordered logistic regressions using the original 1-7 scale in the turnout dependent variable.

In line with the findings reported in Table 2, the effect of corruption is significantly negative and consistent through all model specifications. Model 1 shows that turnout is 8.85 points lower among those respondents who received a corrupt candidate vignette than among those who received an honest or control vignette. Model 2 indicates that the negative effect of corruption is 6.4 points when the baseline is a control candidate. And this demobilizing effect remains statistically significant when we introduce controls for age, sex, and education in model

3. The subsequent models 4-6 indicate that the negative effect of corruption is -8.85, -6.40, and -6.33, when taking into account the clustering and sampling design of the national survey. Models 7-9 reinforce our finding that corruption significantly reduces electoral participation by 8.69, 6.62, and 6.57 points. Finally, models 10-12 further strengthen the evidence that corruption reduces turnout by showing that, when we estimate an ordered logistic regression instead of a linear regression, we find similar negative effects of corruption.

[Table 3 about here]

So far we have shown evidence suggesting that corruption has a negative effect on turnout, but we have not yet explored whether this effect is contingent on the effectiveness of politicians in providing public goods and pork to their constituencies. Table 4 reports the effect of corruption and goods provision on turnout. Model 1 shows that the “corruption” treatment reduces turnout by 9.31 points, and the “effectiveness” treatment increases it by 14.92 points. Model 2 tests whether the effect of corruption is conditional on goods provision and shows that corruption decreases turnout regardless of the level of goods provision. While the effect of corruption is statistically significant, the interaction effect with goods provision is not. This evidence suggests then that corrupt politicians demobilize voters regardless of the level of pork they are able to provide to their constituencies. Model 3 reinforces the evidence of a non-interactive relationship between corruption and turnout when controlling for a number of sociodemographic variables.

[Table 4 about here]

Manipulation Checks

To check whether the experimental manipulation of corruption perceptions was effective, we asked respondents how corrupt they think the candidate described in the vignette was. Table 5 shows the percentage of respondents that answered “very corrupt”, “somewhat corrupt”, “a little corrupt”, and “not corrupt”, across the three experimental groups. Among those receiving the corrupt candidate vignette, only 6% perceive Pedro’s administration as not corrupt, and among those that received the honest candidate vignette, only 22% perceived Pedro’s administration as very corrupt. Those in the corrupt vignette are significantly more likely to

perceive Pedro's administration as corrupt, and those in the honest vignette are more much likely to perceive it as not corrupt. Overall, these responses suggest that the experimental vignette was successful in moving citizens' perceptions of corruption.

[Table 5 about here]

Discussion

Although it is well established that political corruption decreases trust in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy (Chang & Chu, 2005; Seligson, 2002a), we know far less about whether citizens' propensity to participate in elections increases or decreases when they become aware of the corrupt behavior of politicians running for office. Previous research investigating this question has provided competing arguments and mixed findings. In this article, we use a vignette experiment embedded in a nationally representative survey in Colombia to test hypotheses about the effect of corruption on electoral participation, and we also evaluate whether this effect is contingent on the ability of politicians to deliver pork to their constituencies. We find strong support for our first and main hypothesis. Colombian respondents who receive the corruption treatment in our survey experiment are significantly less likely to vote in an upcoming election. We argue that visible instances of political corruption demobilize citizens because they lead to political disenchantment and a loss of political efficacy.

Our second hypothesis stated that the negative effect of corruption on electoral participation should be less pronounced when corrupt politicians are able to deliver pork to their constituencies. This hypothesis is rejected. In fact, the results of the vignette experiment suggest that citizens do not discount corruption when politicians are described as good managers that bring public goods and services to their constituencies. This result is puzzling because there is a long-standing perception that Latin American citizens value politicians who steal but get things done –“*rouba mas faz*”– (Balán, 2014). Presumably, then, the negative effects of corruption on citizens' propensity to go to the polls should be counteracted by the delivery of pork. However, our finding is consistent with the results of several recent papers that show that Latin American citizens do not discount corruption when politicians are seen as effective managers who get things done (Rennó, 2008; Rosas & Manzetti, 2015; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013). In sum, our results suggest that the negative impact of corruption on political trust and political efficacy

(which in turn leads to a decrease in electoral participation) is not immediately erased when politicians are able to deliver pork to their constituencies.

One of the criticisms often leveled against survey experiments is that they lack external validity (Barabas & Jerit, 2010; Morton & Williams, 2010). In fact, the unfiltered treatments received by respondents in a vignette experiment are not necessarily similar to the signals citizens pick up in the “real world.” However, corruption scandals receive a lot of media attention at the national and at the local level (Camaj, 2013; Ferraz & Finan, 2008). Minimally informed citizens should be aware of corruption scandals involving high-level politicians (presidents, governors, legislators). In line with Chong et al. (2015), our results suggest that when citizens receive clear information regarding the corrupt behavior of politicians running for elected office, they are more likely to become disenchanted and apathetic. Note, however, that we are not claiming that political corruption always demobilizes voters. First, corruption is – almost by fiat– an activity that takes place behind closed doors and is therefore difficult to observe. If the corrupt behavior of politicians is not discovered by the media or other government watchdogs, it will have little effect on citizens’ political participation. Second, previous research suggests that corrupt incumbent politicians might spend more time and efforts in electioneering and they are more likely to be challenged by talented political opponents (Escaleras et al., 2012; Hirano & Snyder, 2012; Karahan et al., 2006). It is possible that these political dynamics will produce a small participation boost in elections that take place in corrupt environments. But what our results reveal is that such a turnout boost –when it exists– should be attributed to these campaign dynamics, and not to the corruption scandal itself. Third, the effect of information concerning a corrupt incumbent on electoral participation should be contingent on the overall level of corruption in a country. When systemic corruption is high –as is clearly the case in Colombia– a corrupt incumbent might serve as a reminder of how corrupt the political system is and result in the demobilization of voters. A corruption scandal affecting an incumbent politician in a country where systemic corruption is low might on the contrary boost electoral participation because voters want to sanction the corrupt politician and expect the other candidates to be less corrupt (Klašnja & Tucker, 2013).

Our findings also lead us to question the dominant view of the policy community that increased transparency will make citizens more aware of political corruption and therefore help

hold corrupt politicians accountable in fledgling democracies. While transparency is necessary to fight corruption, an abundance of information about the malfeasance of elected officials might lead to cynicism in the citizenry (i.e. the perception that all politicians are corrupt) and result in the demobilization of the electorate (for a similar argument see Bauhr & Grimes, 2014). Programs aimed at increasing transparency should ideally be accompanied by other reforms that increase horizontal accountability and address the roots of political corruption.

This paper also opens interesting avenues for further research. First, a follow-up study could assess the impact of corrupt incumbent politicians on citizens' political efficacy and political trust. We argue that these are the two attitudes that mediate the effect of corruption on electoral participation. While we show strong evidence for the main hypothesis (i.e. corruption depresses turnout), we rely on previous observational studies to support our causal mechanisms. We believe that survey experiments could also be exploited to assess the impact of corruption on political attitudes (political trust, political efficacy) and emotions (anger, contempt) that in turn affect political behaviors such as electoral participation and vote choice. Finally, with few exceptions (Gingerich, 2009; Inman & Andrews, 2009), the literature studying how corruption shapes political participation has focused on electoral participation, and most works (including the present study) conclude that corruption demobilizes citizens. It is possible, however, that the same factors that make people less likely to vote lead to more political engagement in other arenas. In particular, it would be interesting to study whether citizens who have lost faith in a corrupt political establishment are more likely to engage in unconventional forms of political participation (e.g. protest demonstrations).

Table 1. Experimental Vignettes

Introductory sentence (read by all respondents in the survey)
“Imagine that elections take place next Sunday and that Pedro is a candidate to occupy a legislative seat in Congress.”
Treatment 1: Level of Corruption
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Corruption: “An international anti-corruption commission has accused Pedro of granting several public contracts to contracting companies in exchange for kickbacks during his tenure as governor.”2) No corruption: “An international anti-corruption commission has praised Pedro for having granted several public contracts to contracting companies in an honest way during his tenure as governor.”3) Pure control: [No information on the level of corruption is provided]
Treatment 2: Effectiveness
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Effective: “Pedro is also known as one of the governors that delivered more pork (“construyó más obras”) to benefit the constituency.”2) Ineffective: “Pedro is also known as one of the governors that delivered less pork (“construyó menos obras”) to benefit the constituency.”

Table 2. Average Treatment Effect of Corruption on Turnout: Difference in Means

	Corrupt	Control	Honest	Corrupt vs. Honest	P-value	Corrupt vs. Control	P-value
Turnout	52.61	59.01	63.96	-11.35	0.000	-6.40	0.000
Stand. Error	1.48	1.46	1.40	2.04		2.08	
Observations	520	519	509	1028		1039	

Table 3. Regression Analysis (DV: Turnout)⁵

DV: Turnout	Linear Regression (1)	Linear Regression (2)	Linear Regression (3)	SVY Regression (4)	SVY Regression (5)	SVY Regression (6)	Multilevel Model (7)	Multilevel Model (8)	Multilevel Model (9)	Ordered Logit (10)	Ordered Logit (11)	Ordered Logit (12)
Corrupt	-8.85*** [1.79]	-6.40** [2.03]	-6.33** [2.00]	-8.85*** [1.79]	-6.40** [2.05]	-6.33** [2.03]	-8.69*** [1.75]	-6.62** [2.03]	-6.57** [2.02]	-0.48*** [0.10]	-0.35** [0.11]	-0.35** [0.11]
Honest		4.95** [2.04]	4.91** [2.02]		4.95** [2.12]	4.91** [2.09]		4.17** [2.04]	4.09** [2.04]		0.26** [0.11]	0.25** [0.11]
Age			0.01 [0.06]			0.01 [0.06]			0.01 [0.06]			0.00 [0.00]
Male			5.54** [1.98]			5.54** [2.02]			5.44*** [1.65]			0.29** [0.11]
Education			1.38* [0.81]			1.38* [0.78]			1.49** [0.65]			0.08* [0.05]
Constant	61.46*** [1.23]	59.01*** [1.53]	51.03*** [4.51]	61.46*** [1.12]	59.01*** [1.46]	51.03*** [4.36]	61.75*** [1.42]	59.63*** [1.74]	51.22*** [4.29]			
Obs.	1548	1548	1534	1548	1548	1534	1548	1548	1534	1548	1548	1534

⁵ Models 1-3 are linear regressions with clustered standard errors, using a 0-100 re-scaled dependent variable. Models 4-6 are linear regressions taking into account the survey weighting and sampling. Models 7-9 are multilevel regression models with random effects specified at the district level. Models 10-12 correspond to ordered logistic models, using the 1-7 turnout dependent variable, where 1 means less likely to vote, and 7 more likely. Baseline category is a pure control group in all models (a candidate about whom no information of corruption or integrity was mentioned), except in models 1, 4, 7, and 10 that use the honest candidate as baseline category. Significance levels: *, ** and *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels respectively.

Table 4. Turnout and Goods Provision⁶

	Model	Model	Model
DV: Turnout (0-100)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Corrupt	-9.31***	-6.88**	-6.94**
	[1.75]	[3.05]	[3.00]
High goods provision	14.92***	16.49***	16.73***
	[1.67]	[1.79]	[1.83]
Corrupt*High goods provision		-4.71	-4.37
		[4.26]	[4.09]
Age			0.04
			[0.06]
Male			5.65**
			[1.93]
Education			1.38*
			[0.75]
Constant	54.06***	53.28***	43.96***
	[1.30]	[1.35]	[4.04]
Observations	1548	1548	1534

⁶ Notes: Models 1, 2, and 3 are linear regressions taking into account the survey weighting and sampling. Significance levels: *, ** and *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels respectively.

Table 5. Manipulation Check: “How corrupt do you think is Pedro’s administration?”

	Corrupt Vignette	Control Vignette	Honest Vignette
Not corrupt	6.07%	15.74%	18.65%
A little corrupt	14.68%	30.68%	30.94%
Somewhat corrupt	29.35%	24.30%	28.07%
Very corrupt	49.90%	29.28%	22.34%
Total	488	502	511

Appendix

Table A1. Balance Tests⁷

Demographic Variable	Mean Combined	Corrupt	Control	Honest	Corrupt vs. Honest	Corrupt vs. Honest
Age	39.51	38.75	39.56	40.25	1.51	0.81
Male	0.50	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.01	0.06 [^]
Education	3.61	3.64	3.64	3.54	-0.10	0.00
Urban	0.79	0.80	0.81	0.76	-0.05 [^]	0.01

⁷ Notes: Age is a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 88 years old. Male is a binary variable that captures the proportion of male respondents in the sample. Education is an ordinal variable ranging from “0” (the respondent has had zero years of education, formal or informal) to “6” (the respondent has completed university education). Urban is a binary variable that captures the proportion of urban respondents in the sample. Significance levels: [^], * and ** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels respectively.

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