Challenging Impunity: Electoral Accountability for Corruption in Latin America

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Under what conditions do voters hold leaders accountable for corruption? This dissertation argues that the clarity of electoral alternatives influences the capacity of voters to penalize corrupt politicians. The key proposition is that while citizens are ready to punish corruption, the electoral toll for a corrupt record would be reduced when voters live in districts of unclear electoral choices. Traditional approximations to the question of why corrupt politicians win elections focus on the limited availability of information or on voter biases toward partisan candidates. However, democracies in Latin America have improved in terms of the strength and independence of monitoring institutions in charge of detecting and reporting officials' corrupt behavior. Moreover, rates of partisanship in Latin America tend to be low and partisan attachments are fluid. Given these underlying factors, existing theoretical approaches are insufficient to explain the electoral survival of corrupt leaders. This dissertation aims to fill this gap by systematically examining voting attitudes toward allegedly corrupt and honest politicians in Colombia and Peru, both developing democracies with historical problems of weak rule of law that have undergone processes of party system deinstitutionalization. Contrary to predominant scholarly debates that highlight the deficiencies of electoral accountability, this dissertation finds first that voters in Colombia and Peru are, in fact, willing to punish candidates for congress who are believed to have engaged in corruption-related activities during prior public office service, and that competence in

public works provision does not serve candidates as a stable safeguard against penalties for corruption. Furthermore, this dissertation calls into question the notion that tolerance of corruption in citizens' daily lives readily translates to electoral decisions about corruption, by showing that voters are willing to penalize corrupt politicians even where political malfeasance is prevalent. Finally, this dissertation shows that robust party competition contributes to electoral accountability because stable and competitive parties facilitate clear electoral choices. Penalties for corruption vary as a function of the clarity of the choices available to voters in making prospective decisions. In conclusion, electoral accountability for corruption is resilient, and robust party competition contributes to accountability by shaping the electoral choices available voters.

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Preface

This dissertation was only possible thanks to the support, advice, and encouragement I received from generous mentors, colleagues, friends, and family members throughout my years in graduate school. I can only begin to thank them in this brief note, but I will be forever indebted to each one of them.

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1.0 Introduction

In June 2014, Hilario Ramirez, former mayor of the city of San Blas in the Mexican State of Nayarit (2008-2011), admitted at a campaign rally that he had stolen from the government treasury while in office, but only "*un poquito*" – a little bit. Despite the fact that a YouTube video with these declarations went viral in Mexico, and that his party Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) had already withdrawn support for his prior administration due to irregularities, just one month later he was elected again to the same office: *presidente municipal* of San Blas (2014-2017). Neither the news media's intense criticism of his candidacy, nor the evidence of illegal campaign financing, nor the widely publicized investigation by the Attorney General of Mexico harmed his electoral performance in 2014. After winning the election as an independent candidate, he was able to serve another term as mayor of San Blas amid judicial investigations.

In February 2016, Víctor Albrecht, a front-running candidate for the Peruvian national congress, was exposed in the media by an anti-corruption NGO for a pending trial over an accusation of conflict of interest and embezzlement brought to the courts during his prior tenure as public servant in the provincial government of Callao (2007-2008). This exposure was part of a multiplicity of scandals in 2016 that involved many legislative candidates who had lied in their affidavits in order to conceal their pending trials in both civil and criminal courts. In spite of this revelation, the former mayor of the district of La Perla (1998-2001) in Callao was elected to National Congress as the most voted representative of his home region. He was able to run as head

of his party list, Fuerza Popular (FP), and obtained more than 30,000 votes, despite the severe corruption accusations against him.

Like Hilario Ramirez or Víctor Albrecht, many candidates for national and subnational offices in developing and advanced democracies have pending cases in the justice system and are denounced by the media for alleged corruption crimes. Many of these judicial processes often become high-profile cases of corruption, receiving extensive coverage in the national press and attracting the attention of social and political actors committed to combating impunity and promoting integrity in government. Yet public outrage about the abuse of public office for private gain does not always translate into serious political consequences for allegedly corrupt politicians. While some politicians involved in serious cases of corruption are voted out of office, many others are able to retain popular support and win elections. When and why do voters hold leaders accountable for corruption?

This dissertation is motivated by the rise of integrity concerns in democracies across the globe. Undoubtedly, the issue of dishonesty in government has become a salient political concern in Latin America and around the world. In developing and advanced democracies, voters are increasingly aware of and concerned about the extent to which corruption plagues the political system. Not only are citizens growing distrustful of the political elite, but also the public debate is flooded with cross-party accusations of moral decay. Many governments in developing countries have responded to officials' malfeasance by establishing anti-corruption agencies and by improving government transparency. These administrations have created new mechanisms or strengthened existing ones in order to better scrutinize government officials for possible wrongdoings and to help prevent possible conflicts of interest. At the same time, populist leaders worldwide are building electoral movements by promising to end corruption and oust the allegedly

corrupt ruling elite. In sum, integrity concerns are at the forefront of what shapes democratic government today.

1.1 Background: The Rise of Integrity Politics

Corruption is a central concern of citizens in many democracies worldwide. While government malfeasance is an age-old political phenomenon, public awareness of the problem and its perverse consequences has risen in the past years. Accusations of corrupt behavior involving high-level officials have emerged everywhere from Brazil to France, from Ghana to Chile. In Latin America, the proportion of citizens concerned with corruption has increased exponentially in the last decade. About 9 percent of citizens think that corruption is one of the most important national problems in 2018, whereas only 1 percent were as concerned a decade ago (Figure 1.1). This proportion of citizens is unusually high, given that other pressing matters such as unemployment or crime have traditionally dominated the concerns of the majority of Latin Americans.

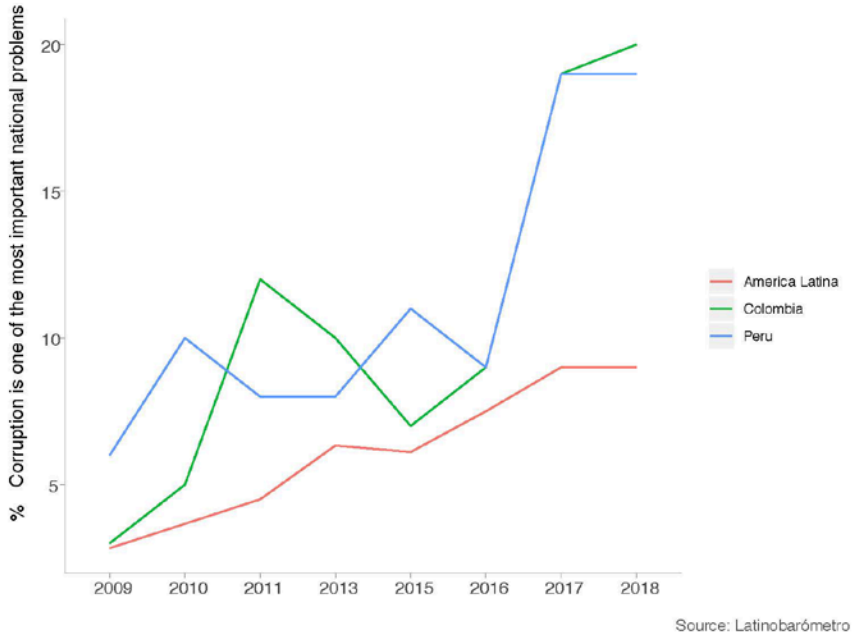

Figure 1.1 Corruption is one of the Most Important National Problems

Even though abundant information and citizen awareness do not necessarily indicate that the problem of corruption has objectively worsened, it suggests that in recent years, horizontal accountability institutions and civil society are more active in investigating suspicious behavior of government officials. The colossal Odebrecht scandal that shook Latin America in 2016 revealed that hundreds of officials in a dozen countries had received bribes from the construction firm to secure lucrative contracts in Brazil and abroad. But in addition to illuminating the pervasiveness of corrupt practices in the public and private sectors in Latin America, the scandal also revealed that monitoring institutions had strengthened, and that these new capabilities, particularly in the auditing system, the courts, and the media, made possible the detection and prosecution of corruption at the highest levels.

Indeed, the topic of corruption has become more salient thanks in part to the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations at the national and international levels working towards reducing the ties between criminal activity and politics. These organizations have promoted public awareness about the need to fight corruption and the importance of denouncing it. Mass media has expanded its capacity to obtain and disseminate information on government wrongdoings. Freedom of information laws have helped make some government documents available to the public and the press, anti-corruption measures have strengthened protections for whistleblowers reporting government misconduct, and legal reforms such as the introduction of plea bargaining have increased information available in judicial investigations. The creation of special prosecutors and independent commissions, furthermore, has facilitated the launching of more corruption investigations of officeholders.

Given the high awareness of corruption as a critical political problem, how do citizens respond to exposed government corruption? What do citizens do with abundant corruption information? How does corruption information affect political behavior and mass attitudes towards political elites and democracy? Who is more responsive to corruption information, and when are they most responsive? In this dissertation, I contribute to a better understanding of democratic accountability in a time of integrity politics, by examining one important portion of the problem: How do citizens decide their vote when candidates are tainted by corruption?

1.2 Focus: The Paradox of Disclosure without Punishment

While there have been significant developments in increasing the visibility of corruption, failure to hold those responsible for it accountable remains a critical deficiency of today's democracies in developing countries. Courts take a long time to reach a verdict, and convictions are still rare. Presidents are often eager to look for ways to derail anti-corruption investigations. Prosecutors and judges investigating corruption face potential undermining of their credibility. Despite more awareness about corruption and more information about elected officials' performance, some democracies in developing countries are unable to curb corruption and prevent those officials suspected of misbehavior from returning to office. Under what conditions might political accountability fail to work properly?

In this dissertation, I focus on one important aspect of the problem of persistent corruption in developing countries, namely the political survival of allegedly corrupt politicians. I use theories of comparative political behavior and political institutions to analyze why electoral accountability for corruption fails. Specifically, the question that I aim to answer is: when and why do citizens vote against corrupt candidates? Given the rise of what I call integrity politics, where citizens' and politicians' concerns about corruption are very salient, it is more perplexing to find that voters sometimes overlook candidates' corrupt records. Why are politicians with corrupt records still able to win elections? More generally, what are the sources of the variability of effects of exposed corruption on the electoral fate of politicians?

Understanding the nature of voter responses to corruption is also important because voting attitudes are a measurable and consequential citizen response to political corruption. If voting attitudes are favorable to corrupt politicians' electoral survival over time, they could reinforce the

deficiencies of the political system to fight corruption. Electing corrupt leaders might, therefore, contribute to the vicious cycle of corruption and impunity. Leniency for corrupt politicians is particularly problematic when it comes to legislators, the politicians in charge of overseeing and investigating corruption in the executive branch, who are also responsible for passing the laws that could initiate the type of long-term anti-corruption reforms that these countries so desperately need. If the investigators in the legislative chamber are involved in corrupt affairs themselves, then the whole legislative oversight could be compromised, and possibilities for reforming the political system could be undercut.

1.3 A Proposal: Contextualized Corruption Voting

Under what conditions do citizens hold candidates accountable for corruption? And how do we explain the paradox of corruption disclosure without punishment? Studying the conditions under which informed voters are inclined or reluctant to cast an anti-corruption vote may shed some light on the bigger puzzle of the failures of electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries. My proposition is simple but under-examined: that informed voters punish corruption leniently because of the lack of clear electoral alternatives. Uncertainty with the menu of electoral choices makes burdensome for voters the enforcement of corruption penalties.

Although scholars typically viewed the failures of electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries as a function of either the weaknesses of monitoring institutions or the limited availability of trustworthy information about government officials' behavior in young democracies (Ferraz & Finan, 2008; Treisman, 2000; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013), researchers

in recent years have increasingly documented systematic variation in voting attitudes toward corruption (Anduiza, Gallego, & Muñoz, 2013; Chong, De La O, Karlan, & Wantchekon, 2015; Weitz-Shapiro & Winters, 2017). However, these more recent studies focus on citizens' economic preferences and partisan identities, and they rarely investigate how patterns of party competition influence the way voters punish corruption. Moreover, these studies have preserved the assumption that citizens are generally tolerant rather than defiant of corruption.

In this dissertation, I propose that the way voters evaluate the corrupt record of a politician varies with specific dimensions of the political environment. Electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries is, in fact, stronger than the literature suggests. I show that voters are generally willing to punish corrupt politicians, rather than being ready to overlook malfeasance when it is convenient. While I find that voters apply selective penalties to corrupt politicians who are competent in goods provision, I also show that competency is not a consistent shield for corrupt politicians. Moreover, I show that voters punish corruption even when they expect malfeasance to be common among the political elite. These findings suggest that existing explanations are insufficient and that voters might be less tolerant of corrupt politicians than both the literature and anecdotal evidence from Latin American politics would suggest.

Finally, I develop a rationale to explain why the variation in penalties for corruption is a function of the clarity of the choices available to voters in making prospective decisions, and not of the lack of reliable information or clarity of responsibility. I draw from the literature of comparative political parties to study an often overlooked factor contributing to the failures of electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries: the clarity of alternatives. However, I depart from the existing literature on comparative political parties in that I take into consideration how party competition matters for electoral accountability, with regard to the *clarity*

of alternatives, and not to the clarity of responsibility. My focus on robust party competition stems from the broader observation that citizens in developing countries often lack clearly viable and predictable alternatives to corrupt politicians on the ballot.

I use evidence from two original survey experiments administered to citizens in Colombia and Peru to investigate whether voters punish the corrupt record of legislative candidates, and to determine what the features of contextualized corruption voting are. Because I utilize a within-country design and because I randomize the corruption record of a hypothetical candidate in each survey, the variation in voting patterns with respect to corruption cannot be motivated by the typical factors associated with the failures of electoral accountability in developing countries, such as the lack of trustworthy information about corruption or the shared partisan identity between voter and candidate. In addition, Colombia and Peru are two countries in which preferences for co-partisan candidates are unlikely to explain failures of electoral accountability because of weak partisan identities and the high fragmentation of the party system.

1.4 Research Design and Case Selection

The central challenge of this project is identifying the effect of corruption on voting preferences. Previous studies attempting to understand the electoral survival of corrupt politicians by examining survey-based corruption perceptions and government approval rates have suffered from the problems of reverse causality and omitted variable bias. It is possible that those citizens who already planned to vote against the government were more likely to have been exposed to damaging information than government supporters were, or that government disapproval and

exposure to corruption information were both driven by another variable, such as bad government performance. Therefore, these observational studies could have presented biased estimates of the effect of corruption on electoral results.

In the present study, my primary goal is to understand whether or not voters in Colombia and Peru actually punish corruption. In order to identify the effect of corruption on voting, I use survey experiments with candidate vignettes, focusing on vote intention. The survey experiments are embedded in national samples, and within each sample I randomly assign respondents to receive a version of the vignette that presents a candidate with either a corrupt or honest record. The experimental approach allows me to compare two groups of respondents whose attitudes toward a hypothetical candidate would be exactly the same in expectation. By randomizing corruption, I am able to attribute any trends in vote intention to the exogenous variation of the candidate's record, and also to rule out the possibility that low electoral support is driven by classic explanations of the failures of electoral accountability for corruption, such as the lack of trustworthy information, good economic performance, or voter partisan identities.

The second goal of this dissertation is to examine how underlying characteristics of the political environment in which corruption is evaluated affect the way voters apply electoral penalties to corrupt politicians. I closely examine how two main characteristics of the political environment interact with corruption effects: widespread corruption and robust party competition. I use two ways of investigating the conditions under which corruption effects vary. I use first electoral variables measured at the local level to assess the attitudes of voters living in districts with weak clarity of alternatives. In simple terms, this method partitions the subjects into subgroups in order to examine treatment-by-covariate interactions. Also, in order to test whether voters in a highly corrupt environment are less likely to punish a corrupt politician, I use additional

interventions in the survey experiment to assess treatment-by-treatment interactions. Finally, I reinforce these findings with the analysis of treatment-by-treatment interactions that evaluate a socio-psychological hypothesis related to the tradeoff of corruption and competence.

I examine the nature of voter penalties for corruption in two democracies: Colombia and Peru, chosen because these two countries share a similar political history and electoral system, as well as attitudes toward corruption that are comparable to the average Latin American citizen. First, both countries share an open list proportional representation system for legislative elections, which in theory should help voters identify an individual candidate's reputation. Second, corruption is a moderately important problem in the two nations, and its salience is increasing, as in Latin America as a whole. Third, tolerance of corruption is moderate and less pronounced than in countries such as Guatemala or Mexico, where the proportion of people who claim that paying a bribe is justifiable is far above the Latin American average. Finally, the two countries share weak partisan identities, a trait that makes them interesting cases of study in light of the dominant literature that posits that voters overlook corrupt behavior from members of their own party.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The rest of the dissertation proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I lay the theoretical background for the empirical chapters. First, I set the scope of the dissertation by explicitly defining accountability as electoral accountability, and corruption as a form of norm transgression by individual elected officials. Then, I outline the existing explanations for the failures of electoral accountability and their limitations. I contrast the monitoring approach with the socio-

psychological approach and propose a way to move beyond them by closely examining contextualized corruption voting. Finally, I present the main argument of this dissertation, which posits that electoral penalties for corruption are shaped by patterns of robust party competition.

In Chapter 3, I describe the empirical strategy for studying electoral accountability for corruption based on the two survey experiments in Colombia and Peru. I describe the experimental approach that I follow to isolate the effect of corruption on vote intention, and I present the experimental and non-experimental indicators that I use to test hypotheses about the conditions that moderate corruption penalties, namely perceptions of widespread corruption and the clarity of alternatives. I finish the chapter by highlighting some of the potential limitations of the empirical analysis presented in this dissertation.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I test three different theoretical explanations for the failures of electoral accountability for corruption: one derived from the socio-psychological approach, and two resulting from my contextualized corruption voting approach. In Chapter 4, I examine of one of the most prominent socio-psychological explanations for the failures of electoral accountability, the tradeoff between corruption and competence. I find that in Peru, corrupt politicians who provide public works are partially shielded from electoral losses, but in Colombia, corrupt politicians who are competent in delivering public works experience *greater* electoral loss than incompetent corrupt politicians. The inconsistency of the moderating effect of candidate competence on corruption suggests that the condoning of corruption in exchange for candidate competence might be highly contextual.

In Chapter 5, I test one form of contextualized corruption voting, based on the hypothesis that citizens who perceive corruption as widespread are less likely to punish a corrupt politician. The question of whether the prevalence of corruption plays a role in voter attitudes toward new

cases of corruption is of particular importance for understanding the ability of candidates with corrupt records to win political office. I find that respondents punish corrupt politicians in highly corrupt environments, and that citizen responses to corrupt politicians in a high corruption environment are statistically indistinguishable from responses in a low corruption environment. This evidence further reinforces the idea that voters are not tolerant of corruption and that other additional sources of variation of the penalties for corruption might exist.

In Chapter 6, I examine the role of the clarity of alternatives in electoral accountability for corruption by examining whether patterns of party competence affect how voters penalize corrupt politicians. After having established that voters are generally willing to punish corruption even when candidates are perceived to be public goods providers and when corruption is perceived to be widespread, I turn to the analysis of alternative factors contributing to the failures of electoral accountability in Colombia and Peru. I find that voters living in contexts of low clarity of alternatives are less likely to punish corruption. This evidence suggests that the way voters evaluate corrupt politicians in multiparty systems might be shaped by the nature of party competition.

In Chapter 7, I conclude with a discussion of the implications and the scope conditions of the findings of the empirical chapters.

2.0 Theoretical Framework: Contextualized Corruption Voting

What effect does corruption have on the ability of elected officials to retain political power? One of the most pressing problems of democracies in developing countries is the accountability deficit. In spite of public outrage over political corruption, awareness about corruption only rarely translates into the electoral misfortune of officials whose reputation have been tainted with credible corruption allegations. Traditional approximations to the question of why do corrupt politicians win elections focus mainly on the monitoring problem. Citizens' limited ability to scrutinize the activities of their representatives explains why voters offer their electoral support to ostensibly corrupt politicians. Therefore, multiple policies have been implemented in Latin America to improve the transparency of government, such as mandatory asset disclosure and reliable audit systems.

Other accounts of the failures of electoral accountability in information-rich environments, however, are beginning to indicate that monitoring explanations are incomplete. Voters are more likely to penalize corruption involving out-group candidates who do not perform well in the economy. While acknowledging that rational voters might sometimes opt to support a corrupt politician who otherwise performs well or who belongs to their identity group, I argue that socio-psychological explanations are also incomplete. They fail to take into account the contexts in which voters penalize corrupt politicians. Therefore, I undertake a careful examination of the problem of contextualized corruption voting. I argue that electoral penalties for corruption are shaped by patterns of robust party competition.

The chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section provides a map of the key definitions from which this dissertation departs. I conceive electoral accountability as an accountability subtype exercised by citizens through electoral decision-making regarding penalizing their political representatives, and I treat corruption as a form of norm transgression that signals candidate character. In the second section, I outline the existing explanations for the failures of electoral accountability and their limitations in attempting to account for electoral accountability for corruption. I contrast the literature emphasizing the availability of reliable information about corruption, the monitoring approach, with the literature emphasizing individual level preferences and identities, the socio-psychological approach. And, finally, I propose a way to integrate both frameworks and to move beyond them by looking at individual-level responses to corruption while taking into account the political context.

The third section briefly outlines my argument. I argue that carefully examining contextualized voter reactions to corruption would allow us to better understand electoral penalties levied on corrupt leaders as a form of selective penalty, and to challenge the idea that the electoral survival of corrupt leaders in Latin America indicates that citizens are passive towards corruption. I will claim that voters are not tolerant of corrupt politicians and that selective penalties exist by showing that candidate competence cannot always shield corrupt politicians and by demonstrating that voters would punish corruption even in highly corrupt environments. Then, I detect a potential source of selective penalties for corruption by demonstrating that voters would punish corruption less severely when the electoral options are unclear.

In brief, the central idea of this dissertation is that citizen responses to exposed corruption are shaped by local patterns of party competition, because voters are often limited in their choices. A key notion in this argument is, therefore, the concept of *clarity of alternatives* that refers to

patterns of party competition that allow voters to identify clearly viable or predictable electoral options, thereby increasing the opportunities for electoral accountability. As I will show, the decline in electoral accountability for corruption in democratic systems is consistently related to the clarity of alternatives, and not to a lack of reliable information about corruption or to voter economic preferences overshadowing corruption concerns. The nuance of this argument is that party competition matters for electoral accountability for corruption beyond what the literature has identified as the clarity of responsibility. While the literature has assumed that political parties' role in electoral accountability is mainly to enhance the performance information available to voters such that they can punish politicians retrospectively, I argue that in a context where corruption information abounds, parties must also signal to voters the choices available to the electorate.

2.1 Definitions

This section provides a definition of the two building blocks of this dissertation: accountability and corruption. I describe electoral accountability as a form of vertical accountability defined by the electoral choices that citizens make to punish political representatives. Limiting the scope of the dissertation to a form of accountability that is exercised by the citizens has some advantages over other more wide-ranging approaches. While studies of horizontal accountability are important for understanding how democratic erosion happens when the institutions of accountability do not work properly, they neglect to acknowledge that when all these institutions have failed, sometimes the citizens are the only remnant of democratic strength

in a country. Conversely, these studies also omit to acknowledge that even successful institutions of accountability will have limited effects over the long term if citizens continue to support corrupt politicians at the polls. Electoral accountability is not only a relevant stage in the democratic process of accountability, but also a highly distinctive phenomenon that lends itself to thorough empirical testing.

The second conceptual block of this dissertation is corruption. To better identify the causes of electoral accountability failures, I delineate corruption as a form of norm transgression that can be found in any public office and that denotes candidate character or quality rather than government performance. I argue that corruption can be better understood as a form of norm transgression because, despite the fact that following a purely legal definition of corruption can facilitate cross-national comparisons, a more sociological definition allows me to grapple with the important puzzle of why equally serious cases of corruption that carry a similar level of social acceptability receive different penalties. I also note that some of the most common forms of corruption in developing countries are bribery, embezzlement, and kickbacks. This prevalence is why, I will later explain, I chose to portray corruption in the experiments as bribes in exchange for public contracts.

I argue that corruption can be better understood as an indicator of candidate quality or character. I do not approach corruption as the outcome of government policies, although the studies that evaluate how corruption perceptions affect government approval rates made valuable contributions (Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits, 2016; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013). My approach to corruption as candidate quality rather than government outcome is effective for studying electoral accountability, firstly because it allows me to study corruption consequences within one country rather than only across countries. After all, an important paradox of voter

responses to corruption is why similar types of misconduct would receive different penalties. Second, treating corruption as a sign of candidate quality allows me to study corruption beyond the presidency, which is important given that corruption involves elected officials in many different state offices.

2.1.1 Accountability as Electoral Penalties

In his elucidating work on horizontal accountability, O'Donnell deliberately left the question of weak vertical accountability unanswered. In agreement with Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin 1999), he stated that we needed to be skeptical about the degree to which elections are truly an instrument with which voters can punish or reward incumbents (G. A. O'Donnell, 1999, p. 30). He continued: "Whatever may be the case (something I will not try to elucidate here), it seems clear that under the conditions that prevail in many new polyarchies… the effectiveness of electoral accountability tends to further diminish." Picking up the pieces of the puzzle of electoral accountability failures, I approach electoral accountability as an instance of accountability exercised by citizens through their vote decision-making. In this sense, voting is a tool that citizens can use to discipline their political representatives (Mainwaring & Welna, 2003).

Electoral accountability deserves scholarly attention for a number of reasons. First, elections are the last-resort device for democratic accountability. Electoral accountability is, in a way, the most important type of accountability, the last mechanism remaining when all else has failed. Given that courts and tribunals are so often weak and slow in enforcing the rule of law in new democracies, voters become the ultimate resource of democracy. Voting does not only have

an ex post facto role, but it can also have a deterrent effect. Assuming that elected officials want to retain political power, these rational politicians would anticipate electoral punishment and modify their behavior accordingly. Elections are therefore the most accessible tool available to citizens for disciplining elected officials. They are also a conduit for a particular type of accountability: political accountability. Elections reflect *political* evaluations that voters make of their representatives' fitness for office, which differ from the type of judgment that courts make about the *legal* liability of public officials.[1] Hence, elections are a critical accountability mechanism in the chain of political institutions involved in controlling the conduct of politicians.

A second reason why electoral accountability is a crucial type of accountability to study is that there is an explicit delegation connection between elected representatives and citizens (Manin, Przeworski, & Stokes, 1999; Przeworski et al., 1999). For democracy theorists, it would be desirable for executive or judicial authorities to have limited powers over the elected representatives' behavior. Presidents' and judges' ability to monitor and sanction elected representatives should be restricted because lawmakers act on behalf of the citizens, and because the legislative assembly is usually the first democratic institution that illiberal governments attempt to subdue. Undemocratic leaders can easily manipulate presidential and judicial powers to threaten elected representatives and silence the opposition. Concern about potential authoritarian behavior is the reason why elected representatives enjoy ample protections against criminal prosecution.[2]

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[1] Nevertheless, as it will become apparent later, these two types of accountability are never fully independent from each other.

[2] The rules of legislative immunity vary greatly across Latin America. The rationale for immunity is that it ought to "safeguard the legislature's ability to work and avoid legislative decisions being influenced by extraneous motives and pressures" (Clark, 2016). Nevertheless, as I will argue later, four decades since the Third Wave of Democratization the pressures on legislators do not uniquely come from the presidents but also from external economic actors.

Penalties for improper performance of legislators are, therefore, usually less contested when coming from the citizens who voted them into office in the first place.

While I conceive the concept of electoral accountability as a distinct form of accountability that is exercised by citizens, it shares with other types of accountability that delegation is at its core.[3] Some would argue that classifying accountability based on the direction of the action into horizontal and vertical accountability is not analytically useful, because all types of accountability imply a hierarchical relationship between a principal and an agent. In game theoretical terms, the principal delegates a task to an agent who will later be evaluated based on their performance in fulfilling this task. Delegation is temporary and conditional on the performance of the agent, a form of contract that can be rescinded at any time. Other classifications of accountability also see delegation as a provisionally entrusted responsibility that can be withdrawn from the agent at the principal's discretion.[4] They divide accountability into two types depending on the arena in which the action of accountability is initiated. They differentiate between internal accountability, established by the separation of power arrangements, and external accountability, enforced by the citizens.

A third reason why electoral accountability is a crucial type of accountability to study is that it can be extended to any elected public official. Electoral accountability refers to the tool that citizens can use to hold responsible an agent with whom they have a delegation relationship. When

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[3] For example, horizontal and vertical accountability, but also internal and external accountability. O'Donnell's definition of horizontal accountability was: "The existence of state agencies that are legally enabled and empowered, and factually willing and able, to take actions that span from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachments in relation to actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state that may be qualified as unlawful" (G. O'Donnell, 1998, p. 117).

[4] See Sklar (1999).

scholars apply the aforementioned concepts of accountability to presidential systems, they are quick to assume that the executive branch of the central government is always the sole agent responsible to the public, and they leave little space for the study of accountability exercised with respect to members of other branches of government. External accountability, for instance, is defined in opposition to internal accountability, denoting the actions of accountability that governmental agencies take to prevent the sitting president from abusing their power. Given the dispersed nature of corruption in new democracies, where the national executive is not the only potential locus of corruption, it becomes more important to define accountability in an explicitly broad sense, encompassing all elected representatives of any public office of the state.

Another example of the problems that arise when conceptually separating vertical from horizontal accountability, or internal from external accountability, is that they are often more intertwined than it seems on the surface. For example, the concept of external accountability can obscure the fact that oftentimes accountability exercised by society is assisted by the actions of the courts, the media, or governmental agencies that provide the information about political representatives' behavior. In this dissertation, my approach to accountability is fundamentally centered on citizens' viewpoints and on how voters use their electoral decision as a tool to punish officials. While I do not attempt to examine in detail the variety of actions taken by accountability agencies, I acknowledge that these actions are inevitably factored into voters' attitudes and behavior towards corruption. The politics of blame surrounding anti-corruption judicial activism could be the topic of a whole different research project, possibly a natural extension of the present one. Nevertheless, I restrict the present study to the analysis of voting behavior because electoral accountability, as I will further argue here, is not affected simply by finding out the facts about the

misconduct of elected officials (monitoring), but it requires also acting in accordance with these facts (enforcement).

Voters' exercise of electoral accountability is composed of two parts: monitoring and enforcement. While many early definitions of accountability focused only on the capacity to scrutinize governmental actions, accountability in fact has another component beyond that of establishing blame for wrongdoings, which is the enforcement or the ability and willingness of principals to apply a penalty for the transgression. Some scholars label these two components as answerability and enforcement, where answerability refers to the actions of monitoring but with stricter demands, including the obligation of the agent to inform the principal of its actions and the opportunity for the principal to question the agent about the logic of such actions.[5] As I will show later, answerability, or sometimes simply monitoring, is the component on which most of the literature about accountability for corruption has focused so far. Although this literature has greatly advanced our understanding of accountability, I will argue that it helps us understand only one part of the problem of accountability.

Accountability cannot be fully effective without enforcement. Enforcement refers to the ability of the principal to compel compliance with the law. It entails the principal's ability to apply penalizations to either an agent that violates certain rules of conduct, or, in the case of elected representatives, an agent that transgresses the terms of the implicit contract of delegation of authority. The goal of monitoring is to assign responsibility for a transgression, whereas the aim of enforcement is to apply a sanction for such a responsibility. The two-fold concept can also be

[5] According to Schedler (1999) information alone is not enough for answerability to exist; the public should be able to ask difficult questions to the government agency about its decisions.

observed in the definition given by Przeworski. According to Przeworski et. al. (1999, p. 10) a government is accountable "if citizens can discern representative from unrepresentative governments and can sanction them appropriately." In their conception of representation, unrepresentative governments are those that deviate from the implicit principal-agent agreement.[6] In other words, according to their perspective, accountability is only accomplished if government performance also prompts electoral consequences.[7]

Finally, it must be noted that electoral accountability is of course not the only form of accountability exercised by citizens. Citizens can use other tools for disciplining their electoral representatives, such as protesting in the streets, submitting formal complaints, or joining political parties. The literature on political participation investigates conventional and non-conventional forms of participation through which citizens can express their political disapproval when members of the political elite are believed to be involved in corruption. However, in this dissertation I limit my inquiry to voting preferences, because reported vote inclinations are one of the most easily measurable forms of political attitude. While this narrow definition of the concept of accountability as something purely electoral can limit my ability to extrapolate this study's conclusions to other non-electoral means of voicing discontent, it will nevertheless increase my confidence in the reliability and validity of this study's measurement of accountability.

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[6] More specifically, a government is said to be held accountable when either of the following happens: the agent implements the policies it signaled to the principal at the time of the election (responsive), or voters sanction them for the outcomes of such policies.

[7] In the same vein, Mainwaring & Welna (2003) indicate that accountability demands the existence of actors capable of exercising oversight as well as the possibility of imposing sanctions when officials are found responsible of unlawful acts. Furthermore, they argue that actors demanding accountability might be government officials or citizens.

2.1.2 Corruption as Norm Transgressions

Charges of political corruption are allegations of transgressions of accepted norms of behavior in public office. Corruption generally revolves around some form of illegal, ethical, or moral transgression that evokes social disapproval from the public. But not every type of illegal or socially disapproved behavior that is often characterized as corruption should be considered *political corruption*. Corruption is a label used to refer to many forms of transgressions in which public officials engage. These acts span a broad range of misconduct from drunk driving to election fraud, from accepting bribes to sexual abuse, etc. But public officials' misconduct related directly to their role as officeholders fall within the realm of political corruption.

Transgressions that are considered political corruption involve the misuse of the power of public office. Some scholars define it as the abuse of discretionary control over government resources and authority associated with public office. While there is a consensus that political corruption can occur in virtually any public office of the state, some scholars distinguish between grand corruption, which refers to corrupt acts committed by presidents, congress members, governors, and other high-ranking officials, and petty corruption, which refers to the misbehavior of bureaucrats such as police officers or civil servants. The most common activities falling under the category of grand political corruption are bribery, extortion, influence peddling, collusion, embezzlement, illicit enrichment, conflict of interest, and illegal campaign finance. This dissertation will be concerned with grand corruption, and not with petty corruption.

Grand Corruption

Among the aforementioned types of corruption, the two most prominent types particularly involving elected officials are: bribery and embezzlement. These are also the two most clear-cut and unambiguous types of corruption. Bribery is defined as the "explicit exchange of money, gifts, or favors for rule breaking or as payments for benefits that should legally be costless or be allocated in terms other than willingness to pay" (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016, p. 8). Therefore, bribery involves a public official receiving a payment for "any type of official, state-sanctioned, authoritative act" (Morris & Blake, 2010). For instance, we would consider bribery a situation in which an interested party in a trial paid a judge to accelerate or hinder a judicial process, or if an international firm paid a legislator to pass or block a certain bill that would have an effect on its economic interests.

The second most typical instance of corruption by elected representatives is embezzlement, which is normally defined as theft or misappropriation of funds placed in one's trust. Also defined as "a public official's use of her discretion to steal or otherwise misappropriate government resources for a purpose other than their intended, legal use" (Casey, 2014). Unlike bribes, this form of corruption does not clearly involve a private agent engaging in a transaction with a public official. For instance, a governor can divert public financial assets to their personal bank account and then fix the books to hide the missing resources,[8] or a legislator can use publicly owned buildings or vehicles for conducting electoral campaign operations or any other activities unrelated to their official role. Fisman and Golden (2017) also highlight these two archetypical forms of

[8] Public prosecutors' powers to "follow the money" in foreign bank accounts is making it increasingly easier to expose cases of diversion of assets.

corruption, bribery and embezzlement, which are different in that the first one involves the trade of favors and the second one involves outright theft.

Finally, a particularly common practice of corruption by elected officials is accepting kickbacks in public procurement. A kickback is a particular type of "negotiated bribe" in which an official receives remuneration in the form of money, gifts, or goods in exchange for interceding in favor of the bribe-giver to obtain a government contract. For example, a governor receives a commission of 10% of the value of a government contract for helping a contractor win a bid for a construction project or for the acquisition equipment,[9] or a legislator accepts a bribe from a multinational construction company for his or her assistance in arranging a meeting with key gatekeepers in the process of a construction bidding.

Controversies about the Meanings of Corruption

The term corruption has an intrinsic connection to private or particularistic gain. For Gerring and Thacker (2004, p. 300), corruption is "an act by a public official (or with the acquiescence of a public official) that violates legal or social norms for private or particularistic gain." For Nye (1967) it is the "abuse of public power for personal gain." Other scholars use, instead, a broader definition of the concept of political corruption by conceiving it as norm transgressions that might, or might not, yield any immediate personal benefit. Unlike the latter, I argue that relaxing the boundary of particularistic gain would make the concept of corruption too similar to any type of abuse of power (e.g. genocide or coup d'états), therefore my definition of

[9] About public procurement corruption see (Heimann & Pieth, 2018; Søreide, 2002).

corruption implies that corrupt rents would be used by a public official for personal advantage, either by increasing their private wealth or for political advantage.

Another controversy I shall address here is whether corruption should be defined in a cultural or a legal way. All of the aforementioned norm transgressions involve different facets of the problem of abuse of office. However, some abusive behaviors may be legal, and some illegal behaviors may be socially accepted (Scott, 1972). For some authors, corruption is broadly defined as behavior that deviates from formal goals. For instance, Nye (1967) puts formal rules at the center of his definition of corruption: "behavior which deviates from the normal duties of a public role… or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence." To avoid the limitations of legalistic criteria, I include in my concept of corruption those behaviors that, even if legal, are at least socially disapproved of or "offensive to widely shared views as to how an official should act" (Gardiner, 2002). Relaxing this boundary is important for studying corruption in new democracies, where the rules of the game that structures political life are so often informal (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006).

Of course, the problem of having a norm-based definition of corruption rather than a clear-cut legalistic definition has the downside that what constitutes conduct offensive to the public interest may vary across societies. As Lancaster and Montinola (1997, p. 198) point out: "concrete manifestations of corrupt behavior will differ across cases." Borderline cases of conflict of interest may be seen as acceptable in some societies, especially in developing countries where norms of reciprocity could sometimes be stronger than the principle of meritocracy. As Rose-Ackerman puts it: "One person's bribe is another person's gift." Nevertheless, in-depth knowledge of

accepted social norms would help guide a consistent application of the concept of corruption.[10] Moreover, public officials' norm transgression, while not always typified in the law, could be as noteworthy as their illegal behavior and, in occasions of controversy, it could even have more turbulent political consequences.

Other conceptualizations of corruption from which the notion of political corruption advanced in this dissertation differs include state capture and crony capitalism. These are system level conceptions of corruption, whereas this study's notion of political corruption limits itself to individual officials' behavior.[11] State capture is the description of systemic corruption in which "special interests literally take control of state institution through a range of mechanisms" (Morris & Blake, 2010).[12] Crony capitalism is a system of favors that grant private actors privileged access to the state (e.g. Kang (2002). I conceive of corruption as individual practices not as political systems. Furthermore, while my definition of corruption shares with state capture that special interests are involved, the range of mechanisms through which private actors permeate politics in cases of state capture do not necessarily always violate the norms of conduct in public office. Moreover, although what the concept of corruption shares with the concept of crony capitalism is

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[10] Some definitions of corruption also involve the exchange of favors, nepotism, cronyism, judicial fraud, and conflict of interest. Some neighboring concepts of corruption are pork barrel legislation, rent seeking and patronage. For a more detailed discussion about the definition of corruption see Lancaster and Montinola (1997). See Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman (2005) for a discussion on the differences between corruption and pork barreling: "The former refers to illicit efforts to increase one's personal wealth; the latter includes government programs that benefit a narrow group of citizens often in the politician's home district."

[11] See more about the unit of analysis in the chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[12] See also Hellman, Jones, and Kaufmann (2000). Interestingly, Garay and Salcedo-Albarán (2012) use the concept of state capture to describe a particular type of "armed corruption" occurring in Colombia. To them, the participation of drug traffickers and other illicit social agents in arrangements between privates and politicians gives corruption in Colombia a violent tone. For more on state capture, see also: Grzymala-Busse (2008); Innes (2014).

that private actors use inducements to obtain special treatment, particularism is not a necessary condition for corrupt behavior. Corrupt behavior could sometimes challenge impartial institutions and still be considered an arbitrary action transgressing the norms of accepted public official behavior.[13]

Treating Elected Officials' Corruption as a Sign of Candidate Quality

Most of the literature has conceived of corruption as an outcome of government performance that affects citizens' wellbeing, in a fashion similar to how unemployment, crime, or increasing economic growth does. I conceive of corruption as a form of norm transgression that can indeed affect the economic wellbeing of voters, but which is not so easily equated with other aspects of government performance. First, corruption cannot easily be mapped onto left-right dimensions as economic or social policy-based positions can.[14] Moreover, rather than a regular non-programmatic issue, corruption is a type of character-based valence issue akin to trustworthiness and integrity that defines the character and abilities of the candidate.[15] A politician who campaigns on anti-corruption issues could be either a left-leaning or a right-leaning

[13] As Rose-Ackerman and Palifka (2016) point out, the problem with defining corruption as "particularistic institutions" is that forms of bribery or illicit behavior that undermine already unjust arrangements (e.g. a ruler's effort to favor a tight elite) would not be covered by the definition of corruption. Therefore, they opt for a more neutral approach and define corruption as the perversion of agency relationships. See works by Bo Rothstein and Mungiu-Pippidi about the view that corruption involves departures from impartiality in the exercise of public office.

[14] See Curini (2015) about party strategies using policy-based and non-policy-based valence issues. They argue that while the literature on "issue ownership" investigates policy-based issues, fewer studies work on party's campaign strategies based on "character valence attributes" such as trustworthiness, credibility, and integrity.

[15] See also Stone and Simas (2010) or Best et al., (2013); Curini and Martelli, 2010, 2013; Fackler and Lin, (1995).

politician.[16] Second, rather than learning about corruption through direct experience in the same way citizens learn about the state of the economy, voters acquire information and form perceptions about corruption through news reporting on political scandals. Monitoring institutions play a particularly important role on corruption perceptions because the hidden nature of corruption means that public exposure following journalistic and judicial investigations are more frequently the source of narratives about corruption than personal or third-party experiences are.

I conceive of corruption as a sign of candidate quality and not as a government outcome also because the nature of corruption nowadays is such that a broad range of elected politicians in different public offices can be implicated.[17] Rather than being concentrated in the hands of a powerful head of government, the profits extracted via corruption are now diffused throughout different levels of the state apparatus.[18] Also, the organization and power of private actors are such

[16] This particular nature of corruption is another reason why I will later operationalize corruption as personal charges against candidates and not as governmental policies failing to keep the overall levels of corruption low, which is how most of the literature studies corruption (See for example Schwindt-Bayer and Tavits, 2016).

[17] The prominence and scope of corruption scandals today is sign of the changing nature of corruption. In his study of corruption and neoliberal market reforms, Manzetti (2000) points out that the dramatic events that led to the presidential crises of Collor in Brazil and Perez in Venezuela in the 1990s were only the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, while in the 1990s most of the high-level scandals gained prominence because of the involvement of presidents, the scandals in the 2010s are gaining prominence because of the elaborate schemes that involve networks of politicians of different ranks, political parties, and nationalities. The recent Odebrecht scandal, which touches public officials in over seventeen countries in Latin America, Europe, and Africa, indicates that corruption networks appear to be larger than once believed. For instance, in the SQM case in Chile it was found that the Chilean Chemicals and Mining Company had channeled $5 million in illicit campaign funds to 8 political parties across the ideological spectrum. These are not paid bribes to isolated political gatekeepers, but rather complex schemes that implicate businessmen and politicians of political parties of opposite ideologies across multiple national borders.

[18] The scope of the phenomenon cannot be overstated. For instance, in a study about clientelism in Peru, Muñoz (2018, p. 126) pointed out that "in a press conference in 2014, the anti-corruption attorney reported that 92% of the 1,841 mayors nationwide were under investigation for alleged

that massive multinational firms pay bribes to multiple gatekeepers across diverse public offices of the state. Infrastructure projects such as building a dam, a road, or a school can produce corrupt gains for national as well as for local public officials. Public procurement is such a complex process that usually a variety of government departments and local authorities can benefit at multiple stages.[19] If corruption can occur in virtually any public office of the state, studies of accountability for corruption should take its officeholders into account.[20] Therefore, a focus on the survival of individual elected officials as individual politicians and not as a single government offers greater analytical leverage across a larger sample of cases. [21]

Finally, given that legislature is one of the most important counterbalances to executive power, why does it so often suffer from weak electoral accountability? Legislatures, especially in presidential systems, are seen as inherently having institutional interests that conflict with those of

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acts of corruption, including embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, abuse of office, and collusion."

[19] See the concept of "competitive bribery" in Rose-Ackerman 2016's typology (p. 277).

[20] In addition to the complexity of market actors and government actors, the processes of democratization and decentralization have allowed a larger number of elected and nonelected officials to play a more important role in the policymaking process. As a result, private actors representing legal or illegal economic interests now opt to bribe a larger number of officials.

[21] Another problem with studying corruption as a governmental outcome is that there are fewer cases to study. To the extent that the national executive office is no longer the sole focus of corruption potential in new democracies, studying only heads of state would considerably limit our realm of observations. While presidents are being voted out of office or impeached over offenses to the public office more often than before, the occurrences of national executive corruption are too few. Cases of presidential survival despite corruption are more visible but not more frequent than cases of gubernatorial or legislative survival. Possible cases of corruption in executive offices in Latin America include: Carlos Menem and Fernando de la Rua in Argentina; Hugo Banzer in Bolivia; Fernando Collor de Mello and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brazil; Miguel Angel Rodrigues and Rafael Angel Calderon in Costa Rica; Leonel Fernandez in the Dominican Republic; Lucio Gutierrez in Ecuador; Rafael Callejas in Honduras; Arnoldo Aleman in Nicaragua; Mireya Moscoso in Panama; Luiz Gonzalez and Juan Carlos Wasmosy in Paraguay; Alberto Fujimori in Peru; and Jaime Lusinchi, Carlos Andres Perez, and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela.

the executive, which should support their accountability potential (Fox, 2007, p. 35). But very often the president is able to build a legislative majority. In fact, even in cases of divided government, collaboration between branches seems to be more problematic than gridlock. Therefore, one important avenue for disciplining the government is through the selection of legislative members. In the context of presidential aggrandizement, for example, studying the election of members of the legislature becomes even more important if cover-ups of collusion are more common than effective oversight. The slow process of democratic backsliding is often conducted by presidents who enjoy popular support as well as the support of a legislative majority.

2.2 Lessons from Previous Theories

Two approaches offer distinct key analytical insights into the workings of electoral accountability for corruption. On the one hand, the monitoring approach highlights the centrality of monitoring institutions that favor transparency of government activities and reveal information about public officials' corrupt behavior. On the other hand, the socio-psychological approach highlights the role of preferences and identities in order to argue that informed voters might still favor a corrupt politician if voters care more about that politician's stance on certain issues than about their corrupt record. Yet, both of these approaches are incomplete.

The monitoring approach is correct in assuming that formal institutions can assist political actors in observing the activity of public officials and checking that duties are performed correctly, and that monitoring can help prevent the persistence of corrupt officials in government. However, given its emphasis on a monitoring role of institutions, this approach underplays the influence of

preferences and values on the way individuals acquire and process information. In fact, many times citizens who receive negative news about elected public officials are already strong detractors of those same officials. Voters are more likely to reject or minimize corruption information that incriminates male politicians or members of their own party or ethnic group. Thus, by focusing on formal mechanisms for detecting and reporting corruption, rather than on individual preferences and values that shape electoral accountability for corruption, this literature is unable to explain a significant part of the variation in electoral accountability for corruption.

In the same way, the socio-psychological approach, which centers on individual predispositions in acquiring and processing corruption information, overlooks key aspects of the institutional environment in which such information is disclosed. This approach assumes that if voters care enough about the issue of corruption and process negative information about in-group candidates in a fairly unbiased manner, then they will automatically use this information to exercise accountability at the ballot box. However, even if corruption issues ranked higher among voter concerns and if out-group candidates were fairly evaluated, voters might still fail to translate evaluations of corruption to electoral choices. More importantly, I will argue in this chapter, voters may be unable to attribute negative and positive responsibility to specific political actors. Not all types of information-rich environments allow for easy blame allocation and solution identification. In fact, some of the biases in anti-corruption voting could be systematically associated with features of the institutional setting in which information is disseminated.

2.2.1 Monitoring Approach

One of the most common explanations for the failure of electoral accountability for corruption is the lack of timely and reliable information. Information asymmetries occur when citizens have imperfect information about the behavior of government officials. Detecting corrupt behavior of officeholders is, of course, extremely difficult given its clandestine nature. But extensive theoretical work has documented the advantages of reducing information asymmetries for attaining positive government outcomes regarding a number of policy issues.[22] More informed voters, the rationale goes, are more likely to hold government accountable for bad performance in office. In contrast, if voters are not adequately informed, the likelihood of ousting a poorly performing government decreases. Information asymmetries are so central to theories of accountability that some scholars argue that corruption arises fundamentally from monitoring failures (Lederman, Loayza, & Soares, 2005).[23]

Recognizing the centrality of informed voters in electoral accountability, the literature has maintained that formal institutions that facilitate observation of the activity of public officials and ensure that official tasks are carried out correctly can help prevent corruption in government. This finding has led to the promotion of transparency laws, independent audit systems, special anti-

[22] Political economy studies highlight the role of information and mass media on good governance outcomes, such as economic indicators or public policy indicators. For example, Mendel (2008) finds that public food distribution and calamity relief increases with media circulation in India. They argue that: "mass media can play a key role in enabling vulnerable citizens to monitor the actions of incumbents and to use this information in their voting decisions."

[23] Freedom of the press, by publicizing wrongdoings by the government, tends to reduce the informational problem between principals and agent. According to Lederman et al 2005: "Evidence on the importance of freedom of press for political outcomes is presented, for example, in Peters and Welch (1980), Fackler and Lin (1995), Giglioli (1996), and Djankov et al. (2001)."

corruption courts and agencies, and strong investigative journalism, in hopes that more information-rich environments will lead to reduced corruption. Each one of these institutions has received praise for increasing the likelihood of detecting and reporting myriad forms of irregularities and mismanagement by public officials.

Transparency laws implemented by governments worldwide are justified by the importance of abundant information for monitoring corruption. Campaigns to raise voter awareness about corruption and bolster media scrutiny are believed to be effective in reducing public officials' misbehavior. Making government offices more transparent should make the agent aware that the principal can easily learn about his or her misconduct, thereby reducing the incentives for corrupt behavior. Using this logic, international organizations have favored Freedom of Information Laws as a tool to combat corruption.

Many reforms improving transparency about the background of candidates running for elected office, such as the release of reports of their records or making affidavit and asset disclosures mandatory, have also been implemented to curtail the nexus of politics and crime across the globe. In more than 150 countries, candidates must now make affidavit disclosures regarding their criminal records and financial assets.[24] Empirical studies demonstrate that the enactment of financial and business disclosure laws is associated with lower corruption (Djankov,

[24] Some of these public disclosure laws are tied to restrictions on candidate entry, such as in Brazil, where the Clean Record Law prevents candidates with criminal records sentenced by a federal court to run for office, a law that effectively put Lula Da Silva out of the 2018 next elections in Brazil (BBC, 2018).

La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, & Shleifer, 2010) and that increasing the likelihood of government audits reduces the amount of missing expenditures (Olken, 2007). [25]

Extensive empirical literature has documented the role of mass media and audit systems in detecting and disseminating corruption information. In a study of the Italian lower house of parliament between 1948 and 1994, Chang, Golden, and Hill (2010) found that electoral accountability for allegations of criminal behavior depends on the diffusion of relevant information by the mass media. In a study of corruption scandals that affected local governments in Spain between 1996 and 2009, Costas-Pérez, Solé-Ollé, and Sorribas-Navarro (2012) found that incumbent mayors lose an average of 14% of votes when they are charged with corruption and press coverage is extensive. Similarly, a pioneer experimental study, Ferraz and Finan (2008), found that publicly-released audit reports had an impact on re-election rates of mayors in Brazil, and that the effect was more severe in municipalities with local radio stations. A more recent experimental study of audit reports extends this finding to Mexico and shows that voters punish malfeasant mayors only in districts covered by local media stations (Larreguy, Marshall, & Snyder Jr, 2014, 2015).[26]

However, sometimes the existing mechanisms for detecting and reporting corruption are not trusted sources of information. For example, it is often the case that the legitimacy of the courts

[25] Other scholars have reported the significant gains that have been made in accountability institutions in Brazil. The state capacity to oversee and sanction wrongdoing by elected and nonelected officials is composed by several interdependent institutions: the Comptroller General, the Accounting Tribunal, Federal Police, Public Prosecutors, and the courts (Power & Taylor, 2011; Praça & Taylor, 2014).

[26] Although there is also some mixed evidence of the effect of information. See Banerjee, Kumar, Pande, and Su (2010). Also about legislators in India and Japan: Aidt, Golden, and Tiwari (2011); Yazaki (2017).

and the media in putting forward credible accusations of corruption is brought into question. The legitimacy of the media is particularly deficient in environments where the political elite repeatedly discredits independent journalists and investigative reporters.[27] The legitimacy of the judiciary is also undermined in environments where presidents repeatedly intervene in the nomination and promotion of judges (Pérez-Liñán & Castagnola, 2009). Not only the president, but also powerful economic and criminal actors frequently interfere with judicial processes by pressuring court officials to hinder or accelerate trials, or even change sentences.[28]

Decisions to prosecute or acquit high-level political officials accused of corruption have made the courts a target of intense public criticism. In Brazil, judges came under public scrutiny for political bias in the Mensalão scandal in 2009, as a result of their refusal to prosecute Lula (Helmke & Ríos-Figueroa, 2011). More recently, when Lula handed himself over to police to begin serving a twelve-year sentence for corruption charges in April of 2018, judges were again criticized for stirring up a supposed 'witch-hunt' to persecute political opponents.[29] Anti-corruption judicial activism often sparks important public debates about whether the judiciary is coming down equally

[27] In Ecuador, former president Rafael Correa's attacks on the media via his Twitter account created a hostile environment for journalists. President Trump, following a similar pattern, openly accuses journalist and media outlets of lying and producing 'fake news'.

[28] The judicial crisis in Peru in 2018 illustrates this pattern of interference. Audiotapes were released in which judges of the Supreme Court could be heard trafficking influences and negotiating sentences with dubious businessmen associated with drug-trafficking. Hinostroza is the judge who dismissed money-laundering charges brought against Keiko Fujimori. Latin American Weekly Report - 26 July 2018 (WR-18-29).

[29] Later, a new episode unfolded around the Habeas Corpus presented by Lula. A judge approved the Habeas Corpus that would allow Lula to stand trial out of jail, but the judge was a former member of the PT party and had been appointed during Dilma's government, raising concerns about the politicization of the judiciary in Brazil (Latin American Weekly Report - 12 July 2018).

hard on the right as it is on the left. These debates increase skepticism about corruption accusations and undermine the ability of well-informed voters to hold leaders accountable for corruption.

New empirical studies indeed show that low credibility of sources reporting corruption can help explain the failures in accountability. For instance, some studies argue that the disclosure of corruption information by prosecutors or judicial authorities, rather than by the media, could discourage public opinion responses against corruption (Botero, Castro Cornejo, Gamboa, Pavão, & Nickerson, 2017; Botero, Cornejo, Gamboa, Pavao, & Nickerson, 2015). Also, Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2017) find that less educated voters who are not as successful in discerning credible information sources from non credible ones would be more likely to overlook corruption. Similarly, Gonzalez Ocantos and Pavao (2018) find that public distrust in the judiciary might decrease the likelihood that anti-corruption judicial activism would increase cynicism.

2.2.2 Socio-Psychological Approach

Even if citizens received all the unbiased information that they could possibly obtain and were cognitively capable of making sense of complex reports about corruption, their own preferences could interfere with their ability to punish corruption. In an ideal world of fully informed voters, corrupt officials would still be voted into government if voters' partisan, gender, and policy preferences were aligned with those of corrupt officials.

Economic concerns are an important factor in explaining why the corrupt record of a politician might not always matter to voters. Even if transparency laws were comprehensive and consistently enforced, and if voters were well informed and trusted all the institutions in charge of

exposing corruption, they could still opt to support corrupt candidates at the ballot box if they cared more about other issues of government performance. For instance, voters would be willing to trade corruption for economic wellbeing if economic government performance ranked higher in their preferences (Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013), or they might opt to overlook public officials' transgressions if the costs of corruption were outweighed by material benefits directly handed out by corrupt officials (Manzetti & Wilson, 2007; Rosas & Manzetti, 2015). And mayors would weather the reputational losses of corruption if they were perceived as public goods providers (Pereira & Melo, 2016).

Especially in a crowded informational space, voters often rely on partisan or ethnic cues to infer what the most important issues are and how the government has performed on them. Citizens take shortcuts to make sense of the environment and avoid coding information in a way that would contradict their previously held beliefs (Taber & Lodge, 2006). Partisanship also conditions how critical of political corruption citizens are (Anduiza et al., 2013). Partisan biases have been widely documented with regard to how voters process information about the state of the economy (Bartels, 2002), and the scholarship on partisan biases about valence issues such as corruption is emerging, with new empirical studies in Spain (Anduiza et al., 2013) and the United Kingdom (Eggers, 2014; Vivyan, Wagner, & Tarlov, 2012). There is also empirical evidence that citizens sometimes do not evaluate corrupt politicians as harshly when officeholders belong to the same ethnic group (Carlson, 2015) or are male politicians (Barnes & Beaulieu, 2014). In sum, this line of inquiry contends that the failures of accountability can be explained by voters' values, predispositions, and group affiliations.

A limitation of the existing explanations is that they seem to be overly confident that solving the problem of biased acquisition and processing of information would reduce the failures

of electoral accountability for corruption. They assume that if voters cared enough about corruption and had access to reliable information about representatives' misdeeds, then they would automatically use this information to exercise accountability at the ballot box. However, even if information were reliable and if corruption issues ranked high in voters' preferences, voters could still fail to translate evaluations of corruption to electoral choices if they lacked the electoral options to punish corrupt politicians.

2.2.3 Explaining Electoral Accountability for Corruption

My theoretical contribution builds on existing evidence that suggests that the unavailability of trustworthy information (monitoring approach) as well as voter preferences and identities in information acquisition and processing (socio-psychological approach) can play an important role in explaining the persistence of corrupt officials. Figure 2.1 represents the existing literature on these two broad components. The strand of the literature that highlights the monitoring explanations is depicted with a rectangle on the top left corner, and the strand of the literature that highlights the socio-psychological explanations is represented by a rectangle on the bottom left corner.

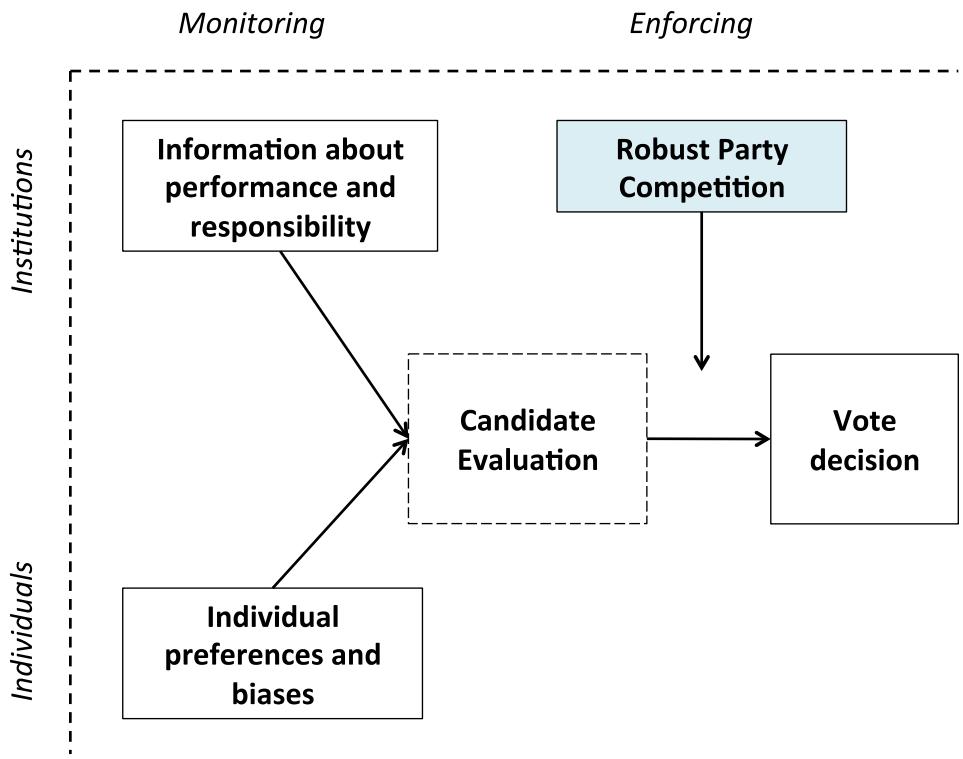

Figure 2.1 Three Approaches to Electoral Accountability for Corruption

These two approximations of the problem of electoral accountability have greatly advanced our understanding of the electoral fate of corrupt politicians. On the one hand, they are correct to argue that effective systems of monitoring are important for fighting corruption, and that actual mechanisms for detecting and reporting corruption are often weak or unreliable. These deficiencies of monitoring institutions would explain why voters sometimes ignore corruption accusations against candidates. On the other hand, it is also true that citizens do not always consider corruption so prominently when making a vote decision, and they often opt for rewarding corrupt officials who could bring tangible economic benefits or symbolic partisan advantages. These preferences

and identities are the reasons why we often observe that informed voters ignore the corrupt records of politicians.

However, I argue that there might be some additional variation in electoral accountability for corruption that is often left unexplained by the existing literature. To uncover the source of additional variation in electoral accountability for corruption, I integrate these two approaches by seriously considering the central features of each mode of explanation. From the monitoring approach, I consider the possibility that voters would lack reliable information about the record of a politician running for office. Therefore, I devise an experiment that randomly assigns respondents to reliable information about the integrity character of a politician, then asks informed respondents to rate the politician. From the socio-psychological approach, I consider the possibility that electoral accountability might be shaped by voter preferences towards certain types of candidates. Citizens already disapproving of a certain type of politician due to his or her partisan affiliation or economic performance might make them more likely to be exposed to (and receptive of) information about that politician's corrupt record. In order to consider the possibility that the failure of accountability is driven by voters' economic preferences, I evaluate whether voters penalize corruption similarly in competent politicians as well as in incompetent ones, and I evaluate this behavior in two countries with relatively weak partisan identities —Colombia and Peru.

I depart from the existing approaches to electoral accountability for corruption in that I consider the possibility that the functionality of reliable information may be compromised in situations with weak electoral alternatives for punishing a corrupt politician. Even in information-rich environments, where information about individual public officials' involvement in corrupt acts abounds, voters may often lack electoral alternatives to punish corrupt politicians. Not all

types of information-rich environments, therefore, allow for easy blame attribution or solution identification, and some of the individual-level differences with respect to corruption-based voting could be systematically associated with patterns of party competition that make more difficult the identification of electoral alternatives.

The socio-psychological approach to electoral accountability does not consider this form of contextualized corruption voting, because this perspective does not evaluate attitudes toward corrupt politicians in relation to the political context in which voters receive information about corruption. The monitoring approach also fails to take into account the political context in which corruption information is disseminated because it concentrates on the trustworthiness of monitoring institutions as a source of reliable information. While the latter approach emphasizes the importance of monitoring institutions, it fails to examine how robust party competition may promote or constrain electoral accountability for corruption. I highlight this unexplored approach to electoral accountability in Figure 2.1 by depicting robust party competition as a blue square in the top right corner.

To examine contextualized corruption voting, I draw on the literature that considers the clarity of responsibility. Scholars of economic voting developed a framework to examine how political institutions structure the assignment of blame and credit (Anderson, 1995; Powell, 2000; Powell and Whitten, 1993). While the operationalization of the clarity of responsibility concept varies considerably across empirical studies, they generally agree that people vote poorly-performing incumbents out of office more often under unified government than under divided government. Multiparty coalition governments are more difficult to hold to account because responsibility for government outcomes is divided among two or more political parties. Empirical studies in this line of research have demonstrated that clarity of responsibility conditions voting

on a variety of policy issues (R. E. Carlin, Love, & Martínez-Gallardo, 2015; de Vries, Edwards, & Tillman, 2010; Hobolt, Tilley, & Banducci, 2013).[30] Extending the literature on performance voting to investigate the valence issue of corruption more recently, Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits 2016) have shown that voting for corruption is also more likely under unified government.[31]

While the clarity of responsibly is an interesting notion that improves understanding of when a national government is more likely to be penalized for increases in perceptions of corruption, the idea is not so useful for understanding how voters evaluate the corrupt behavior of individual politicians seeking an office in congress. When information abounds about the responsibility of individual public officials for corruption, the question becomes one of the clarity of alternatives. The role of party competition, therefore, refers only to the problem of electoral alternatives in this context. The analytical value of the concept of *clarity of alternatives* is in that the existing literature on electoral accountability for corruption has not examined this alternative source of variation in voter penalties for corruption.

[30] With a handful of exceptions, this literature has limited itself to economic voting, but more recent updates are looking at issue voting as well, such as EU policies (de Vries et al., 2010).

[31] Scholars in the conditional economic voting literature developed a framework for identifying the institutional structures that enhance the perceived unified control that the incumbent government has over policy- making, in order to estimate the likelihood that the citizen will assign responsibility for economic and political outcomes to the incumbents (Powell & Whitten, 1993). "The greater the perceived unified control of policymaking by the incumbent government, the more likely is the citizen to assign responsibility for economic and political outcomes to the incumbents." Powell & Whitten 1993. See also Tavits (2007). They have seen how clarity of responsibility conditions performance voting (Hobolt et al., 2013). See a similar argument with regards to the impact of "power-sharing" institutions on the magnitude of the economic vote in Raymond M. Duch and Stevenson (2005); Raymond M Duch and Stevenson (2006).

2.3 The Argument

This dissertation's theoretical framework integrates socio-psychological theories and monitoring theories to derive a hypothesis about how contextualized corruption voting works. The central proposition of this contextualized corruption voting approach is that party competition patterns affect the way voters enforce penalties to corrupt politicians. In brief, the general argument that I put forward in this dissertation is that electoral accountability for corruption is stronger than the existing literature would suggest because, while citizens living in contexts of weak clarity of alternatives tend to refrain from enforcing large electoral penalties on corrupt politicians, voters are not entirely forgiving of corrupt politicians and are ready to reject corruption even under theoretically disadvantageous situations. In particular, voters selectively apply penalties for corruption to competent politicians, and the reputation of being a public good provider is not a reliable shield for corrupt politicians. Moreover, voters punish corruption even when they expect malfeasance to be common among the political elite. At the same time, accountability for corruption sometimes diminishes because weak party competition prevents voters from anticipating clear electoral alternatives to corruption. My argument proceeds in three basic steps:

First, voter economic preferences do not consistently account for the failures of electoral accountability for corruption. The existing socio-psychological explanations are correct in claiming that voters prefer politicians who are competent in delivering public goods. Political representatives in national assemblies are expected to serve the economic interests of their constituency. But voters do not simply weigh economic benefits against corruption; they also evaluate a candidate's corrupt behavior through the lens of economic performance. This interactive relationship between character and performance was not explicitly explored in prior experimental

studies about the tradeoff hypothesis. Taking this interaction into account in an experimental framework, I argue that competence in public goods provision does not consistently shield candidates from penalties for corruption. The tradeoff between corruption and competence sometimes manifest as a blessing and sometimes as a curse. In fact, I find that voters in Colombia penalize corrupt behavior more harshly in competent politicians when public infrastructure projects are favorable to new opportunities for corruption.

Second, citizens in highly corrupt environments are particularly sensitive to the problem of corruption. Electoral accountability for corruption, therefore, still functions even where citizens expect politician malfeasance. The vast literature studying the vicious cycle of corruption is correct in assuming that citizens living in highly corrupt environments might be so accustomed to corruption that they are willing to put up with the existence of bribery in their daily life and even to engage in bribery more frequently. But such tolerance of corruption does not preclude voters from showing resistance to corrupt politicians' electoral ambitions. The consequences of perceptions of widespread corruption on voting penalties for corrupt politicians have not been directly studied in the existing literature. Even when voters expect corruption to be widespread, citizens tend to be concerned about the levels of corruption among the political elite and ready to speak out against corrupt politicians. Instead of a normalization mechanism, I find evidence in favor of an indignation mechanism.

Third, the way voters evaluate corrupt politicians in multiparty democracies is shaped by the nature of party competition. Party competition is instrumental for electoral accountability because political parties create expectations of clarity of alternatives. Whenever the party system offers a stable pattern of interaction of parties, and this competition is contested enough to offer viable alternatives with real chances of winning, this type of robust party competition shapes

voters' responses to corruption in democratic settings. Related literature on voting behavior has examined party competition and party composition of government from the point of view of responsibility attribution. The problem of blame attribution is not an issue in most cases of exposed corrupt behavior by elected officials. Therefore, we need to take into account the possibility that party competition is significant for electoral accountability beyond responsibility attribution. In particular, I argue, voters might apply larger penalties to corrupt candidates when the electoral options are clear. Conversely, the lack of clearly viable and predictable options might harm electoral accountability for corruption.

In sum, this dissertation provides a theory of electoral support for aspiring legislators with corrupt records in Colombia and Peru, and in doing so it also sheds light on the politics of political accountability in democracies in developing countries.

3.0 Research Strategy

This dissertation has two goals: to understand to what extent voters are willing to hold leaders accountable for corruption, and to discern under what conditions electoral accountability is more likely. In order to accomplish this dual goal, I combine original experimental data with electoral data from Colombia and Peru. I first design a set of vignette experiments to identify the main effect of corruption on electoral support in the two selected countries. Then, I analyze attributes of respondents measured at the district and individual levels to find out whether robust party competition can account for variation in electoral accountability for corruption. I use a within-country design to test this hypothesis of voter responses to corruption being shaped by the clarity of electoral alternatives, as well as two other hypotheses of heterogeneous treatment effects derived from the theoretical approaches that I revised in chapter 2, namely, that voter responses to corruption vary with candidate competence (socio-psychological approach), and with perceptions of widespread corruption (proposed contextualized corruption voting approach).

This chapter is organized as follows. In the first section, I describe the experimental design, including survey samples, vignette instruments, and outcome variables. In the second section, I present the plan of analysis, comprising the approach I use to analyze average and heterogeneous treatment effects. In the third section, I briefly describe why Colombia and Peru are two ideal country cases in which to test my theoretical hypotheses of contextualized corruption voting. In the fourth section, I describe respondents in the two samples and present balance tests indicating that corruption randomization was successful. Finally, I conclude this methodological chapter with a discussion of the possible limitations of the proposed research design.

3.1 Experimental Design

The central challenge of this project is identifying the effect of corruption on voting preferences. Previous studies attempting to understand the electoral survival of corrupt governments by examining the relationship between survey-based corruption perceptions and government approval or reelection rates may suffer from problems of reverse causality and omitted variable bias (Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits, 2016; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013). Therefore, in this dissertation, I opt for an experimental approach to address the main methodological limitations of previous observational work. This approach allows me, I will argue, to disentangle different heterogeneous treatment effects that would have been more difficult to examine systematically with an observational study, and that the new wave of experimental studies on corruption has not addressed.

Self-selection bias is a special threat to causal inference in this project. Corruption information does not emerge randomly, and voter attitudes toward corruption, especially willingness to penalize corrupt politicians, are often endogenous to the availability of information. Corruption details usually leak following the action of journalists, whistleblowers, or monitoring institutions. Therefore, it is possible that voters who might be more willing to punish corruption are also more likely to receive information about corruption. Not only do citizens self-select into segmented audiences with particular political interests and affiliations (Prior, 2007), but also political actors who have the capacity to investigate and reveal corruption are often more willing to do so when the exposure of public officials' misbehavior is potentially consequential (Balán, 2011).

Omitted variable bias is also an important threat to identification in this project. Government disapproval and exposure to corruption information could both be driven by unmeasured variables, such as bad government performance. In fact, previous scholarly work contends that citizens support corrupt governments when they experience good economic conditions (Rosas & Manzetti, 2015; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013). But these observational studies do not really allow scholars to separate two plausible explanations for why corrupt governments get away with corruption: because (a) voters trade off political corruption for economic well-being, or because (b) damaging information about the government is not widely exposed when economic conditions are good. Therefore, in this dissertation I use survey experiments to disentangle these alternative explanations for why voters seemingly ignore corruption and other plausible competing explanations for the failures of electoral accountability for corruption.

In light of the existing methodological limitations of observational studies, I opted for an experimental approach to study electoral accountability for corruption. Nevertheless, it is important to note that experimental studies also come with some potential limitations, especially with regards to external validity. While experiments lend themselves very well to securing internal validity, it is often difficult to extrapolate far-reaching conclusions from a single experiment. Hence, to gain greater certainty of the replicability of the empirical findings in this study, I conducted two similar experiments in Colombia and Peru, two countries that share comparable political systems. In the third section of this chapter, I will further discuss how these two countries differ from other countries in Latin America, and in the last section I will briefly mention some precautions that we should take when attempting to generalize the results to other developing democracies.

3.1.1 Survey Samples

The first study was fielded in Peru during a three-week period from November 2nd to November 23rd of 2015 by a local survey firm, Ipsos-Apoyo.[32] A sample of 1,308 Peruvians was randomly drawn using a stratified two-stage cluster sampling method. The sample was first stratified into 5 regions: Center, North, South, Lima, and Amazon. Then, districts were randomly sampled from within each region with replacement, and from each district, neighborhoods were randomly sampled. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using electronic devices to record the data.

The second study was conducted in Colombia and included 1,532 subjects. The study was fielded between August and October 2016, as part of a larger project investigating the impact of corruption on citizens' political behavior in Latin America. The vignette was placed in the middle section of the questionnaire, which was part of the biannual AmericasBarometer survey in Colombia.[33] Interviews were conducted face to face, and electronic devices were used for data collection.

3.1.2 Experimental Setup

I presented respondents with a vignette that was carefully created to describe a hypothetical

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[32] This survey was financed by a nonprofit organization, Proética, the Peruvian Chapter of Transparency International, which has run a survey on corruption-related matters every two years since 2004. Results of all the annual corruption surveys can be found at: http://www.proetica.org.pe/encuestas-corrupcion/

[33] Technical details of the survey and sampling can be found here: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/

candidate running for congress who has previous political experience as a subnational authority. I chose to present the hypothetical politician as a legislative candidate because we have little understanding about how electoral accountability for corruption works in legislative elections in Latin America. With one exception (Botero et. al. 2015), none of the previous experimental studies on corruption has examined how voters evaluate the corrupt records of candidates aspiring for a legislative seat.[34]

Within each survey sample, I randomly assigned a portion of respondents to receive a vignette describing a hypothetical candidate with either a corrupt record or an honest record. Corruption was portrayed as bribes in exchange for public contracts, because bribery in public procurement is one of the most common and severe types of corruption in Latin America (Morris & Blake, 2010; Rotberg, 2018). In the recent Odebrecht scandal that involves public officials in over a dozen Latin American countries, several legislators, governors, cabinet ministers, and presidential candidates were found to have received bribes and illegal campaign donations for helping the Brazilian construction firm win bids for construction projects.

I chose to identify the source of the corruption accusation as an international organization because existing literature on credibility of information indicates that many national monitoring agencies are confronted with counter-accusations of politicization. Botero et al. (2015) investigate whether a newspaper, a local NGO, or a judicial source is more credible, and they find that citizens in Colombia see newspaper reports of corruption as more serious accusations than reports brought

[34] One exception, Botero et. al. (2015), investigate how the sources of corrupt allegations affect the electoral prospects of a politician who is running for congress, but they do not randomize corruption accusations, rendering them unable to estimate overall corruption treatment effects on electoral support. This study was about the sources of corruption allegations rather than the effect of corruption accusations.

by the judiciary or by a local NGO. In line with the concerns about the politicization of the sources, Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2017) find that federal audits in Brazil are seen as more credible sources than accusations brought by opposition parties. Therefore, to reduce the chances that respondents might dismiss my corruption treatment because of a national source's suspected political motivations, I opted to attribute the corruption accusation to an international organization that would be removed from national politics.[35]

Table 3.1 Experimental Prompts[36]

Peru	Colombia
Introductory sentence (read to all respondents in the survey)	**Introductory sentence (read to all respondents in the survey)**
"Imagine that Juan is a candidate for congress."	"Imagine that elections take place next Sunday and that Pedro is a candidate to occupy a legislative seat in Congress."
Treatment Conditions	**Treatment Conditions**
1) Corruption: "An international anti-corruption commission has criticized Juan for performing multiple public contracts in exchange for 1 million soles in bribes during his previous administration as mayor." 2) No corruption: "An international anti-corruption commission has praised Juan for performing multiple public contracts in an honest and transparent manner during his previous administration as mayor."	1) Corruption: "An international anti-corruption commission has accused Pedro of granting multiple 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 multiple public contracts to contracting companies in an honest way during his tenure as governor." 3) Pure control: No information on the candidate's record of corruption is provided.

[35] It is worth mentioning that I chose to portrait corruption as an accusation or criticism brought by an international source rather than just a rumor that someone "heard" because an endorsed allegation implies that evidence of wrongdoing exists and that a source responsible for making the accusation can be determined. Whereas a circulating story does not necessarily imply the existence of evidence of wrongdoings, nor can a specific source be made responsible for the accusation.
[36] The survey instruments in Spanish can be found in the Appendices A1 and A2.

This experimental design has an advantage over previous experimental studies that rely on the official release of audit data or report cards (Banerjee & Pande, 2009; Chong, De La O, Karlan, & Wantchekon, 2011; Ferraz & Finan, 2008). By using a vignette experiment that informs respondents of the corruption record of a hypothetical candidate, as they would hear about it on the news, the present design is able to assign individuals to corruption conditions randomly, regardless of the underlying propensities each individual has to receive either positive or negative information. Previous field experimental studies instead conflated the effect of the treatment with preexisting differences in the type of precincts that got each of the treatment variations (e.g. only precincts with corrupt local governments received a corruption treatment condition). Given that the treatment subjects received depended on their attributes, some scholars argue that these studies' estimation approach were flawed (A. Gerber & Green, 2012, p. 403).

This experimental study also has the advantage over other studies that it encompasses two countries. Given the complexities of designing and conducting a successful experiment, most experimental studies are understandably focused on a single country. For this dissertation, as mentioned earlier, I was able to run two complementary studies. I use the first study in Peru to test the plausibility of the theoretical hypotheses. I then use the Colombian study to replicate, complement, and expand the findings. An important extension in the second study, for example, was that I was able to have an additional experimental group for a pure control condition in which no mention of the candidate's record of corruption, either evidence of bribery or evidence of honesty was made. While the theoretical hypotheses in this dissertation call for investigating responses to corruption among informed voters, the pure control condition is nevertheless a useful complement to examine ancillary hypotheses. This pure control condition was possible in the Colombian study only because the local survey team interviewed more subjects than the Peruvian

one. The larger sample size in Colombia allowed me to break the sample into more groups without losing statistical power. Another important extension of the study in Colombia was that I was able to introduce additional post-treatment items in the questionnaire in order to check whether the main corruption manipulation was effective and to test the robustness of my findings regarding voting attitudes.

3.1.3 Outcome Variable

After one version of the candidate vignette, I asked respondents in a third-person question "how likely would it be for someone like you living in a district similar to yours to vote for [Pedro] if elections were held next Sunday?" I took advantage of the third-person question wording to reduce over-reporting of disapproval of a candidate described as corrupt in the vignette. This technique has been successfully used before in studies of corruption because it is an unobtrusive method to test socially undesirable attitudes (M. Klašnja & J. A. Tucker, 2013; Konstantinidis & Xezonakis, 2013; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013).[37]

I opted for a rating outcome rather than a forced choice outcome to measure fine-grained changes in vote intentions. As Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2013) point out, the rating outcome is usually preferred by researchers who are interested in detailed information about preferences (p.6). This technique allows me to focus on a measure of the degree to which voters are willing to punish a corrupt candidate at the ballot box. Accordingly, the responses are recorded

[37] Even though the wording of the question could introduce some noise in the responses, it diminishes the bias generated by social desirability.

on a 1-7 scale, where 1 is very unlikely and 7 very likely.[38] For analyses purposes, I rescale this variable to a 0-100 scale.

As a manipulation check, I asked, "How corrupt do you think [Pedro's] administration was?" in the Colombian sample. This question allows me to test whether respondents in the corruption condition did in fact find Pedro more corrupt than those in the honest condition. It is possible that the corrupt/honest manipulation passed unnoticed because it was buried in a description of an inconsequential candidate. I was able to add this question only in the Colombian survey, because the Peruvian survey was shorter and the local survey team did not authorize additional items in it.

I also measured other ancillary outcomes whenever possible. In the Colombian survey, I was able to introduce an item to measure job approval of the vignette candidate, which I analyze in this dissertation along with the likelihood of electoral support. In addition, I was able to measure reported turnout to estimate the impact of corruption on the likelihood of going to vote. The main results of the turnout analysis are published in Carreras and Vera (2018). Finally, I was able to introduce an item for information seeking in the survey I conducted in Peru to test whether corruption would diminish respondents' interest in seeking out political information. The main results of the information-seeking analysis can be found in Appendix A4.

Overall, this experimental approach was adopted as an unobtrusive way to measure the socially desirable attitude of rejecting a corrupt candidate. It does not expose a respondent to

[38] While a choice-based question might approximate real-world decision-making in a bipartisan setting, my survey studies were conducted in multiparty settings. Therefore, in addition to providing fine-grained information about preferences of respondents, the rating question avoids forcing respondents to make a binary choice between two profiles.

multiple vignettes that would make them aware of the experimental variations (Mutz, 2011).[39] And it inquires about the voting attitudes of a third person, allowing the respondent to answer honestly without explicitly stating their preference.

3.2 Plan of Analysis

To estimate the effect of corruption on vote intention, I calculate the Average Treatment Effect (ATE) using a simple difference of means approach. Specifically, if y_{ic} is corruption treatment, and y_{ih} is honest treatment, I measure the ATE in terms of:

$$\text{ATE} = \text{E}[y_{ic} - y_{ih}]$$

In addition to average effects across the entire sample, I also test hypotheses on heterogeneous treatment effects. Noting that corruption effects tend to be large among some respondents and small or absent among others can provide some important clues about why accountability for corruption works, and whether there are different mechanisms at play under different situations. Therefore, drawing from the existing literature and the proposed theoretical framework in chapter 2, I suggest that three characteristics may affect penalties for corruption. A condition derived from the socio-psychological approach, candidate competence in public works provision, and two conditions derived from my contextual corruption voting approach, the perceptions of widespread corruption, and the anticipation of clear electoral alternatives.

[39] Obtaining repeated responses is a common technique in laboratory experiments. In survey experiments like the present study, it is preferable that respondents evaluate only one vignette at a time.

I employ two ways of investigating the conditions under which corruption effects vary. The first method partitions the subjects into subgroups in order to examine treatment-by-covariate interactions. I primarily use this method when analyzing corruption effects across levels of clarity of alternatives in chapter 6. The second method introduces additional interventions in the survey experiment in order to assess treatment-by-treatment interactions (A. Gerber & Green, 2012, p. 296). This method is used in chapter 4 and 5 to test the explanations for the failures of electoral accountability based on candidate competence and perceptions of widespread corruption.

In each chapter, I explain in more detail the data analysis and the potential limitations of non-parametric estimation, but at the core the analyses share a similar approach. I use a differences-in-differences (DD) approach to calculate heterogeneous treatment effects. Specifically, if y_{ic1} is corruption treatment when individual i is in group 1, y_{ic2} is corruption treatment when individual i is in group 2, y_{ih1} is honest treatment when individual i is in group 1, and y_{ih2} is honest treatment when individual i is in group 2; I measure the DD in terms of:

$$\mathrm{DD} = \mathrm{E}[y_{ic1} - y_{ih1}] - (\mathrm{E}[y_{ic2}] - \mathrm{E}[y_{ih2}])$$

3.3 Why Colombia and Peru?

Conducting these experiments in Colombia and Peru has four main advantages. First, the electoral systems in Colombia and Peru are favorable to electoral accountability. They share an open list proportional representation system for legislative elections, which makes evaluating individual candidates for congress a realistic and relevant practice for respondents. Second, corruption is a moderately important problem in the two nations, relative to the more pressing

problems of unemployment and crime. In fact, the proportion of people who think corruption is an important problem has been on the rise in the two countries for the past decade, as it has been in the whole region. Third, the two countries have undergone processes of party system deinstitutionalization, making partisan identities weak and fluid. Fourth, tolerance of corruption is moderate and not as prominent as in countries such as Haiti or Mexico, two countries with longstanding human rights problems and ravaged with warzone levels of violence, where the proportion of people who report that paying a bribe is justifiable is way above the Latin American average.

3.3.1 Open List Proportional Systems

Colombia and Peru have political systems that are comparable in terms of electoral rules and party system structuration. They share a proportional representation electoral system with preferential vote in legislative elections and a multiparty system of moderate-to-high political fragmentation.[40] According to the existing literature, open lists help citizens assign blame or credit to individual politicians and hold representatives accountable for bad performance (Rudolph & Däubler, 2016). Closed lists, on the contrary, prevent voters from holding individual representatives accountable. Therefore, legislative elections with open lists grant voters in Colombia and Peru the opportunity to influence the elected congress.

In both countries, citizens can choose up to two candidates on the ballot, which gives voters power to influence the candidates they want to win a seat in congress. In this context, respondents

[40] Colombian parties may opt out of the open list PR system by choosing to use closed lists (Pachón, Carroll, & Barragán, 2017).

would take seriously an experiment involving a candidate for a legislative seat. Participants would find the situation attention grabbing and convincing, which would allow the experiment to elicit the targeted decision-making process necessary to test research hypotheses. With regard to the realism of the experimental setting, then, Colombia and Peru are two ideal places to test for electoral accountability for corruption in individual legislative candidates. If I failed to find evidence of electoral accountability in this setting, it would certainly not be due to the lack of experimental realism.

3.3.2 Corruption as a National Problem

I selected Colombia and Peru because, in addition to sharing similar electoral systems, both countries have a long political history of problems with corruption, impunity, and weak rule of law. In both countries, state fragility, political violence, corruption, and organized crime are deeply intertwined (Dammert & Sarmiento, 2019; Palacios, 2006; Quiroz, 2008; Schultze-Kraft, 2017). In fact, both countries have faced serious corruption scandals in recent years, a context that further contributes to the experimental realism of this study. The recent histories of political corruption in Colombia and Peru make citizens in these two nations particularly concerned with the problem of corruption.[41]

[41] In Peru, Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of former president Alberto Fujimori (who is serving a 25-year jail sentence because of corruption and human rights violations) was the front-runner presidential candidate during the 2016 elections. She inherited her father's political party apparatus and was able to capitalize on his enormous popularity, despite that her party was composed of the very same acquaintances that surrounded her father Alberto Fujimori. In Colombia, numerous "political heirs" were also running successful electoral campaigns for executive and legislative offices. They were successors of political leaders who were indicted for colluding with the United

In fact, public concern about corruption reached its highest levels right after the studies were conducted. In late 2016, the Odebrecht scandal revealed that the Brazilian construction firm had paid bribes to politicians in Colombia and Peru. As a result, both countries held anti-corruption referendums in late 2018, in which citizens were consulted on a number of anti-corruption measures, ranging from increasing the penalties for public officials' corruption to banning the reelection of legislators.[42] While it is clear that corruption concerns reached an all-time peak after 2016, corruption and impunity have always been a matter of national concern throughout the political life of both nations.

3.3.3 Partisan Identities

Another reason to select Colombia and Peru is that both countries share relatively weak partisan identities. An important strand of the socio-psychological approach to accountability posits that voters overlook corrupt behavior from members of their own party; however, it is unclear how this line of research applies to developing democracies. Many developing democracies only democratized in the 1980s and 1990s, and even if some traditional political parties have survived now for more than three decades, party systems have been greatly unstable,

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Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a paramilitary group responsible for killing thousands of Colombian civilians (Gutiérrez Sanín & Barón, 2005).

[42] In Colombia, the referendum was celebrated in October 2018 and fell short of a necessary participation threshold to push the measures forward. They needed 12.1 million voters to pass the initiatives, but they only 11.7 million participated. The referendum included questions such as whether to hand down tougher penalties on corrupt officials, whether to impose term limits on lawmakers, and whether the salaries of members of Congress should be reduced by 40 percent. In Peru, the referendum was held on December 2018 and submitted to popular vote four constitutional reforms to combat corruption: imposing term limits for congress members, making congress bicameral, regulating private financing of parties, and modifying the rules for designating judges.

presenting voters with a different set of options every election. In Colombia and Peru, particularly, new political parties come and go, and they do not seem to elicit widespread partisan attachments, nor do they convey clear ideological positions or policy programs. Moreover, supporters seem to be attracted to prominent and divisive personalities, such as Alvaro Uribe in Colombia or Alberto Fujimori in Peru. Given that it is expected that most voters in these settings choose candidates on the basis of their personal characteristics and performance, Colombia and Peru are two suitable countries to test and contrast two mechanisms explaining the electoral impunity of corrupt politicians, the tradeoff between integrity and competence, and the role of the clarity of alternatives.

3.3.4 Tolerance of Corruption

In terms of tolerance, Colombians and Peruvians show moderate acceptance of corrupt behavior of public officials. Neither of these two countries has the strong social norms against corruption that citizens have in Brazil or Guatemala (see table 3.2). In Brazil, public outrage about corruption resulting from the Lava Jato investigation led to street protests in 2014 and a presidential impeachment in 2016.[43] In Guatemala, the outrage over corruption was such that the UN created a commission against corruption, which was menaced by president Jimmy Morales who then was impeached in 2015. Moreover, neither Colombia nor Peru has the levels of social acceptance of corruption that Haiti or Mexico has (see table 3.2). In Haiti, there was a complete

[43] Although the Peruvian president, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, resigned the presidency on March 2018, after Congress initiated impeachment proceedings against him due to alleged connections to Odebrecht money as well, the scandal impacted the country only after this study was conducted (October of 2015).

state collapse after the earthquake in 2010, while drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico has spiraled to warzone levels in the recent years.[44] In Mexico, on average 23 percent of people consider paying a bribe acceptable, whereas in Haiti, this portion reaches 43 percent.

Table 3.2 Percent of Citizens Who Report Paying a Bribe is Acceptable

Country	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	Average
Guatemala	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.05	NA	0.17	0.10
Brazil	0.11	0.15	0.08	0.09	NA	0.11	0.11
Honduras	0.14	0.09	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.26	0.12
Panama	0.22	0.10	0.12	0.08	0.09	0.26	0.12
Uruguay	0.15	0.16	0.10	0.08	0.12	0.12	0.12
El Salvador	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.09	0.09	NA	0.13
Paraguay	0.12	0.18	0.12	0.14	0.15	NA	0.14
Chile	0.18	0.15	0.08	0.07	NA	0.17	0.17
Peru	**0.22**	**0.16**	**0.17**	**0.14**	**0.13**	**0.18**	**0.17**
Costa Rica	0.27	0.14	0.11	0.13	NA	0.21	0.17
Colombia	**NA**	**0.21**	**0.19**	**0.21**	**0.12**	**0.18**	**0.18**
Ecuador	0.21	0.18	0.16	0.19	NA	NA	0.19
Venezuela	0.25	0.13	NA	0.08	NA	0.18	0.19
Nicaragua	0.21	0.28	0.15	0.13	0.20	NA	0.19
Argentina	NA	0.29	NA	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.20
Belize	NA	0.32	0.28	0.13	0.17	NA	0.22
Dominican Republic	0.22	0.25	0.18	0.17	0.22	NA	0.21
Mexico	0.27	0.27	0.21	0.22	0.19	0.24	0.23
Jamaica	0.56	0.39	0.19	0.21	0.32	NA	0.33
Haiti	0.43	0.32	0.32	0.54	0.43	0.39	0.41
Average	**0.18**	**0.18**	**0.14**	**0.13**	**0.14**	**0.16**	**0.18**

Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

[44] See Morris (2013)

By comparison, that figure in Colombia and Peru is closer to the regional average of 18 percent. In Colombia, about 17 percent of people consider paying a bribe acceptable behavior, with that number peaking at 21 percent in 2008, and hitting a low of 12 percent in 2014. In Peru, about 17 percent would pay a bribe if necessary, with that proportion reaching a high of 22 percent in 2006, and a low point of 13 percent in 2014. In both countries, as in the region, acceptance of paying bribes has been decreasing for the past decade (see table 3.2).

This average corruption response in Colombia and Peru means that if I were to find evidence of punishment for corruption in these settings, I would expect greater effects in other Latin American countries with stronger social anti-corruption norms.

3.4 Description of Respondents

In this section, I present the socioeconomic description of the survey samples in Colombia and Peru and the results of balance tests. Both samples are similar in terms of distribution of age, gender, and education, which favors the comparability of the results, and the balance tests show that there is no significant difference between control and corruption treatment, which indicates that randomization was successful.

In terms of age, the average respondent in Colombia is 39.51 years old, and in Peru the average is 36.69 years old. The distributions of age groups follow a similar pattern, with a slightly larger proportion of respondents in the age group of 41-60 in Colombia (see figure 3.1). In terms of gender, 49.71 percent of respondents in the Colombian sample are female, whereas 50.38 percent of respondents in the Peruvian sample are female. Again, the gender proportions seem to

follow a similar pattern, although the Colombian sample seems to be slightly more female (see figure 3.2). Sample representativeness is presented in Appendix A3.

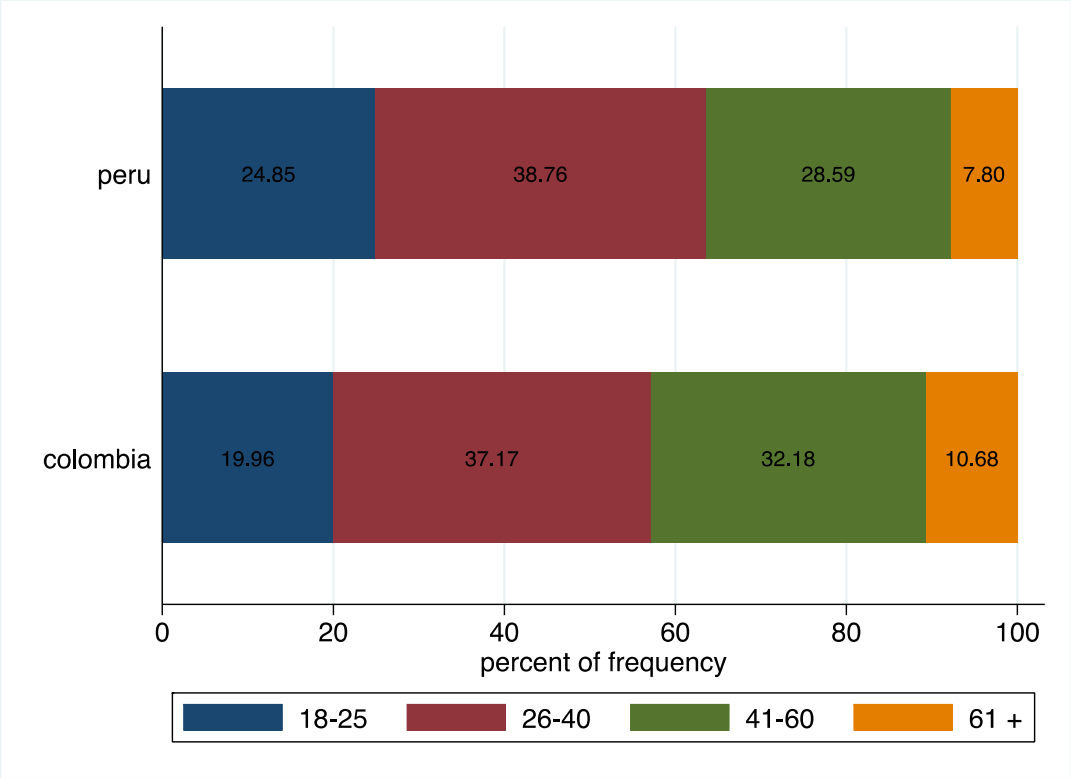

Figure 3.1 Distribution of Age

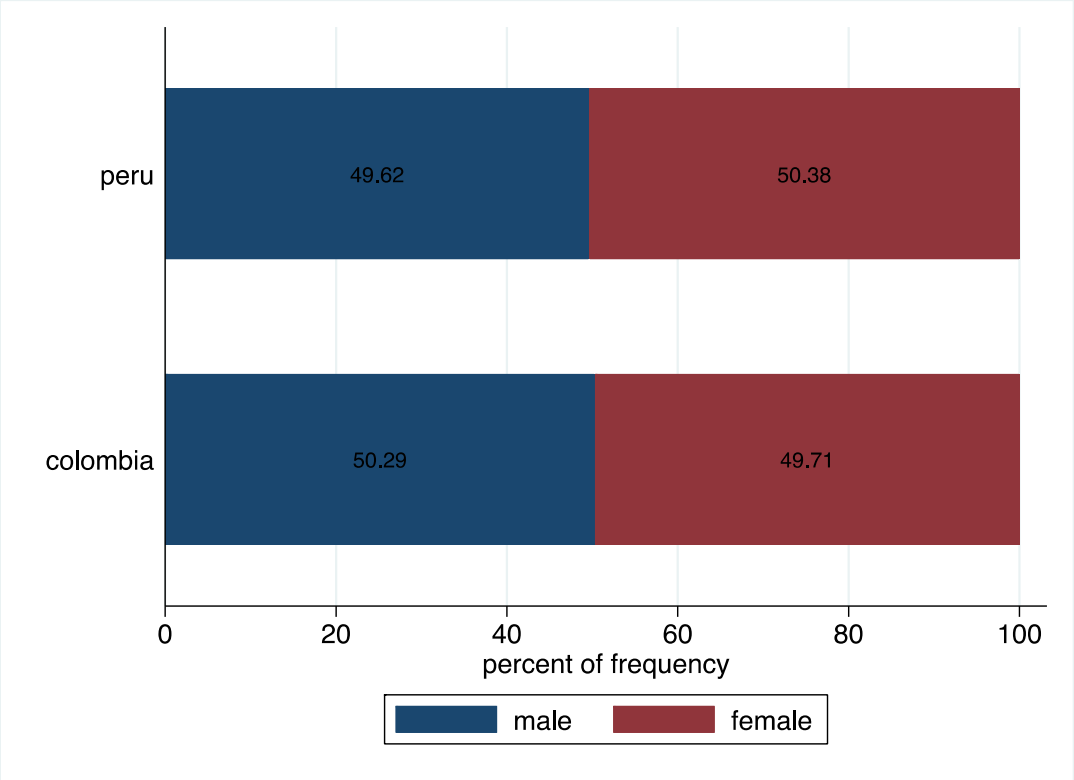

Figure 3.2 Distribution of Gender

The distribution of education is illustrated in figure 3.3. In this socioeconomic variable, the two samples follow a somewhat different pattern. In Colombia, the proportion of university-educated respondents is smaller than in Peru (see figure 3.3). However, this slight divergence is due to the fact that the section of university-educated respondents in the Peruvian sample combines secondary and university level schooling, as the education question in this survey inquired about completed secondary and above. Therefore, there is some level of noise added by the question used in the survey item to create the education proportions shown in this figure.

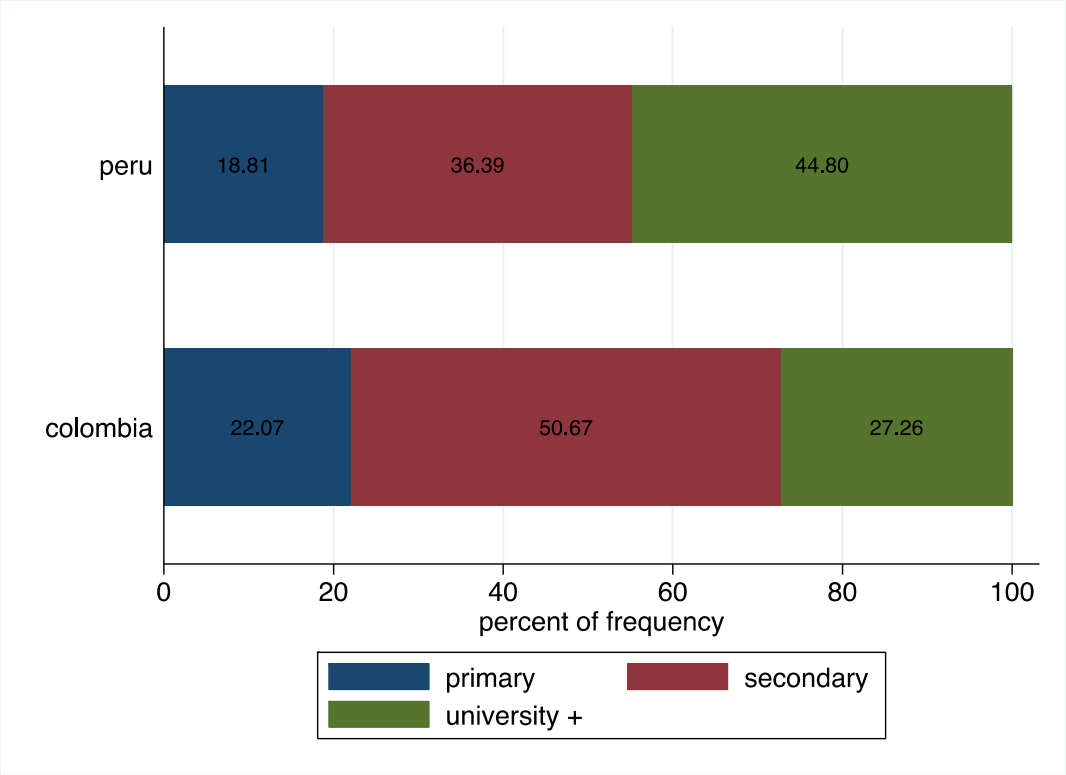

Figure 3.3 Distribution of Education

I turn now to present the balance tests. I run a series of t-tests comparing the means of the groups of experimental condition variable, those receiving the corrupt candidate versus those receiving honest one, by a set of demographic indicators. In Table 3.3, we can observe in the Peruvian sample that respondents are balanced across demographic variables. As a sign that randomization was successful, gender, age, and education do not significantly predict assignment to honest or corrupt conditions.

Table 3.3 Balance Tests for Peru

Individual Significance Tests

Variable	Corrupt Trait P-value
Age	0.404
Female	0.886
Education	0.711
Socioeconomic Status	0.844

Note: All p-values for tests of each variable.

In the Colombian sample, I repeat the same tests. Again, I run a series of t-tests comparing the means of the groups of experimental condition variable, those receiving the corrupt candidate versus those receiving honest one, by a set of demographic indicators. We can observe in Table 3.4 that assignment has balanced groups across demographic variables. Gender, age, and education do not significantly predict the assignment to the honest or corrupt conditions.

Table 3.4 Balance Tests for Colombia

Individual Significance Tests

Variable	Corrupt Trait P-value
Age	0.105
Female	0.692
Education	0.282
Economic Situation	0.496

Note: All p-values for tests of each variable.

3.5 Potential Limitations

This set of survey experiments has an advantage over previous observational studies in that I am able to isolate the effect of corruption from observed and unobserved confounders. These confounders are a prominent challenge in this project because they can be associated with the outcome of electoral penalties of corruption. In addition to disentangling the effect of corruption from the effects of other factors that might make voters less likely to punish it, this research design also lends itself to testing several hypotheses about how certain factors affect political accountability for corruption: candidate competence in public works provision, perceptions of widespread corruption, and weak of clarity of alternatives.

A potential limitation of the experimental approach is the validity of reported vote intentions for studying electoral accountability. It is possible that findings generated with survey measures may not resemble actual voting behaviour. Before over-extrapolating from two experiments, other studies could explore behavioral outcomes in real elections. One interesting avenue for future research would be therefore to compare these survey experimental results to a behavioral benchmark. Whereas some scholars argue that survey experiments would overestimate corruption effects in comparison with field experimental measures using secret ballots (Boas, Hidalgo, & Melo, 2017), others have found that stated preferences in survey experiments match behavioral benchmarks rather well (Hainmueller, Hangartner, & Yamamoto, 2015).

Nevertheless, to the extent that the experimental setup presents respondents with a realistic scenario and requests them to evaluate a credible candidate for elected office in Colombia and Peru, I am confident that the potential limitations to external validity are reduced. While I cannot establish whether preferences about hypothetical scenarios measured in a survey experiment would

follow the same structure than real life behavior, preferences measured in surveys do reveal baseline propensities in voting. Moreover, given that the main purpose of the present study is to understand the conditions under which corruption effects on voting intentions are moderated or exacerbated, this research design can shed light on why these baseline propensities would (or would not) manifest in a given country at a given time.

4.0 Re-Assessing the Tradeoff Hypothesis: How Does Public Goods Provision Influence Voter Responses to Corruption?

When and why do voters hold politicians accountable for corruption? In this chapter, I first examine the main effects of corruption on electoral support, as reported by respondents in the two survey experiments I conducted in Colombia and Peru. Then, I investigate one reason why the literature suggests voters might often opt to overlook corruption: voter preferences for politicians delivering tangible economic benefits to their communities. I test the tradeoff hypothesis by looking at the electoral penalties for bribe-taking that voters apply to candidates described as competent or incompetent public works providers.

Two interesting findings arise from the analyses. First, voters are willing to electorally punish politicians who are believed to have engaged in corruption-related activities during prior public office service, and they are willing to penalize corrupt candidates even when such politicians are presented as competent representatives. In other words, competence does not exonerate corrupt politicians from electoral consequences. A second important finding I present in this chapter is that competence in public works provision is not a stable shield against voter penalties for corruption. While competence affects the penalties voters apply for corruption, it does so in opposite directions. In Peru, voters are more lenient with corrupt politicians who otherwise have a reputation for being competent leaders who provide public works ("enchantment" mechanism). Meanwhile, in Colombia, competent politicians actually face greater penalties for corruption than incompetent ones would face ("disappointment" mechanism).

4.1 Main Corruption Effects

I begin this chapter with an analysis of the main effects of corruption on electoral support in the two survey experiments I conducted in Colombia and Peru. Are citizens as passive and cynical about corruption matters as the literature suggests? The main outcome of interest in this study is the respondent's willingness to cast a vote in support of the hypothetical candidate. As I explained in chapter 3, I measured this outcome variable using a 1-7 scale of the likelihood that a respondent will opt to vote for the candidate, where 1 is very unlikely and 7 very likely. For ease of the analysis, I transformed it to a scale of 0-100, where greater numbers represent higher electoral support. To estimate the effect of corruption on vote intention, I calculate the Average Treatment Effect (ATE) using a simple difference of means approach.

I find that in the samples in both Colombia and Peru, corruption has a negative and significant effect on vote intention. Moreover, these two rates of reduction in electoral support are remarkably similar, -19.64 in Peru and -18.37 in Colombia. Table 4.1 lists the mean values of support under the "corrupt" and "honest" conditions, the difference in means, and the corresponding standard errors. It shows that when a hypothetical corrupt candidate is contrasted with an honest one in the Peruvian sample, support drops from 49.7 to 30.1, and this difference is statistically significant ($p<0.01$). That is, a corrupt record decreases candidate support by 19.6 points on the 0-100 scale.

Table 4.1 Average Corruption Effects in Colombia and Peru

	Combined	Corrupt	Honest	ATE	95% Conf. Interval
Peru	39.88	30.09	49.74	-19.64***	[16.18 - 23.10]
Stand. Error	(0.92)	(1.24)	(1.25)		
Colombia	44.71	35.23	54.46	-19.22***	[15.57 - 22.88]
Stand. Error	(0.98)	(1.20)	(1.43)		

ATE = average treatment effect. *p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

In Colombia, the same contrast leads to a decrease in electoral support from 53.39 to 35.03 points, which represents an average treatment effect of -18.37 points in the 0-100 scale. Again, these two average treatment effects are remarkably similar in the two countries.[45] This strong negative effect of corruption suggests that when presented with a hypothetical situation, citizens are willing to take note and reject a candidate who is believed to have engaged in corruption-related activities.[46]

It is important to remember that thanks to random assignment, a corruption effect can be interpreted as a causal effect of corruption on vote intention. Reported vote intention changes, in other words, cannot be driven by the classical failures of accountability that the monitoring literature usually highlights, such as the availability of reliable information about government officials' behavior. Given credible records of a candidate's integrity, respondents in these surveys report levels of electoral support that suggest that voters guide their voting decisions based on indicators of a corrupt or honest reputation.

[45] Appendix B2 presents results using survey weights.
[46] The manipulation check analysis confirms this result. See Appendix B3.

4.2 Tradeoff Hypothesis: Three Different Accounts

In this section, I move to explore a central hypothesis in the socio-psychological literature that posits that voters will overlook corruption for economic benefits. The socio-psychological approach to explaining the limits of electoral accountability for corruption highlights the centrality of voter preferences and identities. Economic preferences and partisan identities could be driving effects on the electoral survival of allegedly corrupt officials. Within this vast literature, I focus on the issue of the tradeoff.

The exciting empirical literature about the longstanding idea that citizen acquiescence to corruption is a function of the economic benefits voters associate with corrupt politicians has produced mixed evidence. There is insufficient empirical evidence in favor of the well-known tradeoff hypothesis. While some studies have found that economic side benefits could help protect corrupt politicians from electoral penalties (M. Klašnja & J. A. Tucker, 2013; Pereira & Melo, 2016; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013)[47], other research finds only partial support for the tradeoff hypothesis (Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013), and other studies find the opposite, that good performers are punished with larger corruption penalties (Esaiasson & Muñoz, 2014). We therefore need more research to clarify the intricate nature of the relationship between corruption and economic welfare.

The present chapter builds on this socio-psychological literature's disagreement and

[47] Some experimental studies find support for the idea that citizens are pragmatic with regards to corruption, showing that they would tolerate corruption as long as the state of the economy was good (Klašnja, Lupu, & Tucker, 2017; Klašnja & J. A. Tucker, 2013; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013). Similarly, other studies show that corruption cases that ensure jobs, service delivery, or other economic gains are less severely punished than those that do not (Botero et al., 2017; Klašnja et al., 2017; Konstantinidis & Xezonakis, 2013).

analyzes the relationship between corruption and economic wellbeing with additional nuance. I differentiate between three specific ways in which economic wellbeing drives voters' disregarding of corruption (see Figure 4.1). One version of this complex link that is often found in the literature suggests that certain types of corruption bring side benefits that would render corruption innocuous to voters, while other two versions of the link propose that economic performance induces voters to evaluate the corrupt behavior of competent politicians in a fundamentally different way from that of incompetent ones.

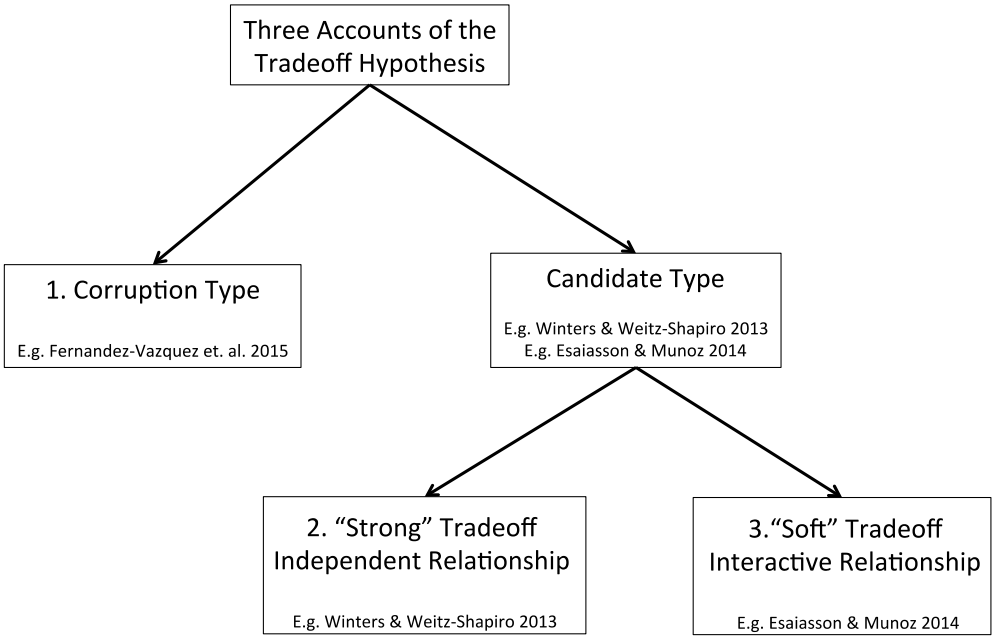

Figure 4.1 Three Accounts of the Tradeoff Hypothesis

I focus on the two versions of the tradeoff based on candidate characteristics, a candidate-based tradeoff. This distinction between tradeoffs driven by corruption types and those driven by candidate types is important, because if voters are more lenient with corrupt candidates who are competent, even corruption that carries side benefits will be harshly punished when attributed to incompetent politicians. Nevertheless, within this account of the tradeoff based on candidate type there is also another theoretical distinction to make about precisely *how* candidate competence relates to corruption. Do competence gains merely offset corruption losses, or do they influence the relevance that corruption carries for voters?

Most studies of the tradeoff have hypothesized that corruption *only* becomes a burden when a candidate is incompetent (what I will call a "strong" tradeoff). Instead, I argue that corruption *always* matters, but that the weight voters place on corruption is more pronounced when a candidate is incompetent (a "soft" tradeoff). In other words, rather than merely additive factors, which would cause a candidate's competence gains to be counteracted by corruption losses, corruption and competence are interactive traits. In the remainder of this chapter, I will test the hypothesis that voters do not just weigh economic benefits against corruption (a "strong" tradeoff), they evaluate a candidate's corrupt behavior through the lens of economic performance (a "soft" tradeoff). With only one exception (Esaiasson & Muñoz, 2014), as I will show, this interactive relationship between corruption and performance was not explicitly explored in an experimental framework before.

4.2.1 Corruption Types

How can we reconcile the diverging findings in favor of and against the tradeoff hypothesis

that posits that voters trade corruption for economic wellbeing?

One step toward making sense of the mixed evidence is to consider the channels through which economic benefits might motivate voting for corruption. A standard account of the tradeoff hypothesis attributes tolerance of corruption to differences in corruption types, because certain corruption practices may bring side benefits that would render wrongdoing acceptable (Fernández-Vázquez, Barberá, & Rivero, 2016). Demanding bribes in exchange for public contracts, for example, could be seen as less reprehensible than receiving illegal campaign donations from large corporations. The first type of corruption would produce identifiable side benefits such as jobs and services, whereas the second type would be obscure about how the average voter might benefit from it and would instead reveal a corrupt leader gaining undue political advantage. While all types of corruption involve some form of private gain from public office, only some types of corruption have evident welfare consequences for the electorate (Fernandez-Vazquez et al., 2016).[48]

This approach is consistent with the longstanding idea that voters might reward corruption if they materially benefited from it (Rundquist, Strom, & Peters, 1977), but it is intertwined with the notion that voters deem some wrongdoings more acceptable than others. For example, Klašnja et al. (2017) finds that corruption that brings construction jobs is punished less harshly than corruption that does not. Botero et al. (2017) finds that corrupt behavior described as clientelism

[48] On a similar note, Bauhr (2017) points out that the differences between need and greed corruption can have important consequences for citizens' mobilization in the fight against corruption. Citizens are more likely to mobilize against corruption when corruption is used to gain access to "fair" treatment (need corruption) and more likely to disengage when it is used to access illicit advantages (greed corruption).

costs candidates less than corrupt behavior that is mainly seen as private enrichment.[49] Other important non-experimental studies also highlight the role of welfare consequences of certain corruption types. Fernandez-Vazquez et al. (2016) for instance finds that welfare-enhancing types of corruption are less detrimental to electoral success than welfare-reducing types. That is, citizens see some forms of offenses as less reprehensible when those offenses have the potential to improve the material wellbeing of their communities.

4.2.2 Candidate Types

However, another plausible instance of the relationship between economic gains and corruption would be one in which voters overlook corruption because the allegedly corrupt politician can sometimes be seen as a competent representative as well. By focusing on candidate type rather than on corruption type, this second interpretation allows us to separate the seriousness with which voters may view certain corruption practices from the economic benefit that they associate with certain politicians.

This distinction is important because while corruption might bring side benefits, it is still possible that some corrupt governments or politicians are less successful at revitalizing the economy than others. Similarly, among candidates who are accused of comparable dishonest behavior, some could be more effective in approving advantageous public policies than others. Good economic outcomes, therefore, would indicate that this authority figure is well suited for the

[49] In an experiment investigating vote buying, Weschle (2016) reaches a related conclusion, that voters judge politicians who engage in corruption differently depending on how they use the money they receive.

job, motivating voters to evaluate corruption qualitatively differently among competent politicians than among incompetent ones.

This subtle difference is particularly relevant in contexts of uninstitutionalized party systems in Latin America, in which partisanship is generally weak and non-programmatic linkages dominate (Kitschelt, 2000; Mainwaring, 2018; Roberts, 2013). When voters cannot rely on party or policy cues to make judgments about electoral choices, they may find signals of quality in candidates' revealed attributes. Candidate type becomes a very important piece of information to guide voting. In fact, candidate type can be such a strong signal that it may motivate voters to overlook corruption evidence. Indicators of candidate competency and efficiency would, therefore, assist voters in better evaluating a candidate's fitness for office and electing highly skilled politicians.

While acknowledging the importance of previous findings that voters are indeed less likely to disapprove of corruption types that carry side benefits (Klašnja et al., 2017), this chapter examines another mechanism for the tradeoff hypothesis based on candidate type: the role of a candidate's reputation of being an efficient public manager. We should expect to see that citizens punish less harshly corruption in a competent candidate who has shown the ability to deliver collective benefits while in office.

4.2.3 Strong versus Soft Tradeoff

While an interaction between competence and corruption is the type of relationship that would seem more straightforward to test from a theoretical standpoint of view, the experimental literature examining the tradeoff hypothesis has surprisingly not explored this interactive

relationship so far.

This omission is surprising, given that observational studies of presidential approval have modeled the tradeoff hypothesis as an interactive relationship (Rosas & Manzetti, 2015; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013). In Figure 4.1, I represented the two types of tradeoff as "soft" tradeoff, referring to the interactive relationship between corruption and competence, and as "strong" tradeoff, referring to the additive relationship. Should we expect different results when examining voting intentions in the context of an experiment where we take corruption as exogenous?

The two experimental studies that directly engage with the tradeoff hypothesis stand out as thought-provoking and original, yet they found only partial (Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013) and null evidence of a tradeoff (Esaiasson & Munoz, 2014). This lack of empirical evidence for a tradeoff makes a systematic inquiry on the topic more relevant. The present chapter, therefore, aims at contributing to empirical evidence focusing on the question of whether candidate type induces voters to evaluate corruption of competent politicians in a fundamentally different way from that of incompetent ones.

Winters & Weitz-Shapiro (2013) tested an additive or "strong" version of the tradeoff, showing that voters often prefer a corrupt but competent to an honest but incompetent politician. This test was limited, however, because it assumed an additive relationship between corruption and competence, and it did not explicitly test the conditional relationship proposed in most of the empirical literature using non-experimental methods. In effect, they did not directly evaluate whether corruption effects depend on candidate competence.

Esaiasson & Munoz (2014), in their unpublished manuscript, were able to implement a test for a "soft" tradeoff, but they found no evidence in favor of what they called the "dampening"

hypothesis. As a result, we do not have strong empirical evidence of a conditional relationship between corruption and competency. Nevertheless, they also show that accusations faced by incompetent mayors are rated more severely than the accusations faced by competent ones (Esaiasson & Muñoz, 2014, p. 17), and yet they find that competent politicians lose *more* votes. That is, in spite of high disapproval of corruption by the incompetent, voters still punished the competent candidate more severely.[50]

In light of the limited experimental evidence for the "soft" version of the tradeoff hypothesis, I propose to revise these empirical findings with two new experiments in Colombia and Peru. I do not only use experimental methods to put the "soft" tradeoff hypothesis of a test, but I also propose a reason why Esaiasson & Muñoz (2014) might have found opposite results than expected. While the "soft" tradeoff suggest an "enchantment" mechanism, by which competent officials are subject to more lenient standards, another mechanism could be that of "disappointment," by which competent officials are subject to stricter standards. Esaiasson & Muñoz (2014) may have found evidence that voters, in certain contexts, have misgivings about competent politicians who are described as public works providers.

Hypothesis 4.1: (Enchantment Mechanism) The electoral penalty for corruption is ***smaller*** *for politicians who are competent in delivering public works than for those who are incompetent.*

Hypothesis 4.2: (Disappointment Mechanism) The electoral penalty for corruption is ***larger*** *for politicians who are competent in delivering public works than for those who are*

[50] According to this study: Among competent politicians, electoral support goes from 7.8 to 4.9, which represents a difference of 2.9, whereas the change among incompetent politicians is only 3.3 to 1.6, which represents a change of 1.7. They attribute this unexpected result to a floor effect in the support for incompetent politicians, among which a corruption accusation cannot lower electoral support given the already low approval of incompetent politicians.

incompetent.

4.3 Empirical Evidence

4.3.1 Data and Methods

In chapter 3, I described the two surveys in which the experiments are embedded in Colombia and Peru, including the samples, the experimental setup, and the outcome questions. Here, I will complement that discussion with a description of the additional factor in the experiment that I use to test the tradeoff hypothesis.

The experimental design allowed me to vary randomly not only the record of corruption of the fictional politician but also her competence in providing public goods. In particular, the manipulation of public goods provision is presented in the form of public works, which are a type of public good that mayors, governors and legislators can directly or indirectly provide. In countries like Colombia and Peru, moreover, political representatives are expected to serve the interest and economy of their constituency.

In the competent condition, respondents were exposed to a candidate that had enacted more public works than the majority of subnational authorities, whereas in the incompetent condition the candidate had completed fewer works than the majority of subnational authorities. Therefore, all candidates were described as having a record of completing some amount of public works for the benefit of their communities, but some candidates were outstanding and others were mediocre.

Table 4.2 Competence Treatment Conditions[51]

Competent Treatment Conditions in Peru	Competent Treatment Conditions in Colombia
1) Competent: "Juan is known for having enacted more public works benefiting the population than the majority of the mayors in the country." 2) Incompetent: "Juan is known for having enacted fewer public works benefiting the population than the majority of the mayors in the country."	1) Competent: "Pedro is also known as one of the governors that delivered more public works to benefit the constituency." 2) Incompetent: "Pedro is also known as one of the governors that delivered fewer public works to benefit the constituency."

4.3.2 Results and Analyses

Main Results in Peru

Do public works help candidates accused of bribe-taking regain electoral support (enchantment mechanism), or do they harm their electoral bids even further (disappointment mechanism)? In support of hypothesis 4.1, I find that voters evaluate corruption of competent politicians in a different manner from that of incompetent ones. Competent officials are subject to more lenient standards.

Figure 4.2 displays the heterogeneous impact of corruption on electoral support for a hypothetical candidate in the two candidate competence conditions for the Peruvian sample. The penalty for corruption is 6.30 ($p<0.1$) greater for those politicians who fail to deliver public works,

[51] The survey instruments in Spanish can be found in the Appendices A1 and A2.

as the conditional average treatment effect of corruption goes from -16.59 ($p<0.01$) in the competent condition to -22.89 ($p<0.01$) in the incompetent condition. Even though the difference of corruption effects under the high and low competence in public works conditions is only significant at the 90% confidence level, this finding provides some evidence in favor of the idea that voters would be more lenient toward corrupt politicians who successfully deliver tangible benefits to their constituencies.[52]

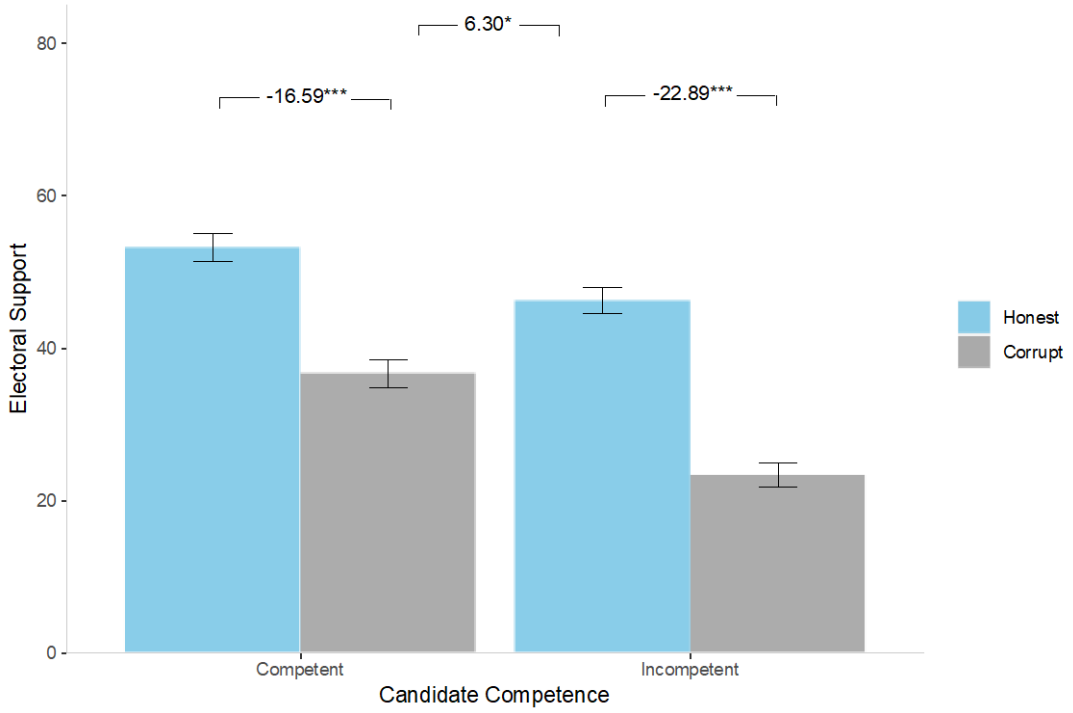

Figure 4.2 Corruption Effects by Candidate Competence in Peru

[52] Corresponding table displaying standard errors and confidence intervals can be found in Appendix B3.

A substantive interpretation of the significant reduction in punishment for corruption suggests that voters in Peru evaluate corruption with a different mindset when the alleged corrupt candidate is a competent politician. This finding is in line with the tradeoff hypothesis (Hypothesis 4.1). Yet, this finding also suggests that voters are prepared to punish corruption even if politicians are described as competent in providing public works. Given that the proverb "*roba pero hace*" (steals but gets things done) is regularly used to claim that Latin Americans are tolerant of corruption,[53] the finding that voters are not entirely forgiving of corrupt politicians sheds new light on the micro-foundations of accountability. Far from fully permissive, citizens seem to apply selective penalties to corruption.

Main Results in Colombia

In the case of the sample in Colombia, I find the opposite relationship between corruption and competence. In line with the findings by Esaiasson and Munoz (2014), competence in public works provision decreases the opportunities for candidates to escape the penalties of corruption. This is evidence in favor of the disappointment mechanism that posits that competent politicians are subject to stricter standards.

Figure 4.3 shows that the punishment for corruption under the competent candidate condition is -24.33 ($p<0.01$) whereas the punishment is -15.31 ($p<0.01$) under the incompetent candidate condition. This evidence from Colombia goes against hypothesis 4.1 ("enchantment"

[53] "It is evident that tolerance against corruption is still high, and in fact in the period 2015–2017, the percentage of Peruvians who considered that those who are corrupt but perform well should not be punished rose from 13% to 22%" (Dammert & Sarmiento, 2019).

mechanism) that public works provision would act as a shield against corruption. It shows that electoral penalty for corruption is in fact rather larger for politicians who are competent in delivering public works than for those who are incompetent. [54]

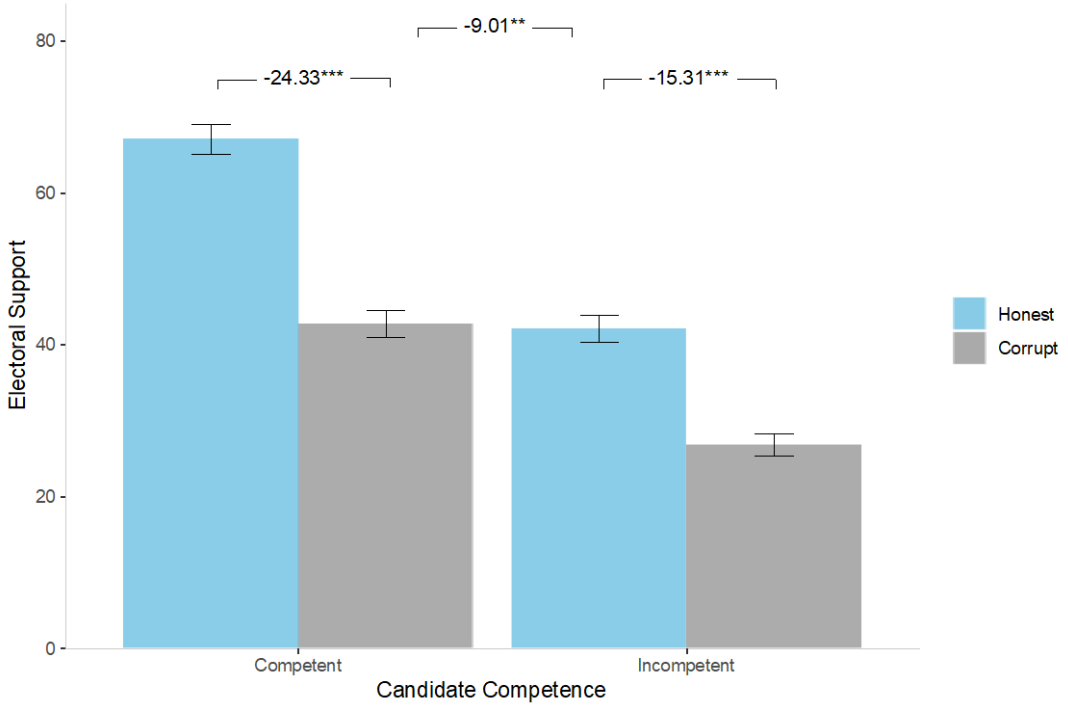

Figure 4.3 Corruption Effects by Candidate Competence in Colombia

4.3.3 Explaining Inconsistent Tradeoff: Enchantment Versus Disappointing Mechanism

To begin understanding the finding in favor of a disappointment mechanism in the case of Colombia, we first need to rule out the possibility that the experimental manipulation of candidate

[54] Corresponding table displaying standard errors and confidence intervals can be found in Appendix B4.

competence was ineffective. Therefore, I analyze in the Colombian experiment an additional question about candidate job approval.

I find that, on average, the competent politician's administration receives higher job approval rates than the incompetent politician's administration. Using a dependent variable where 1 is no approval and 4 is high approval (transformed into a 0-100 variable), I recorded answers to a question about how much respondents would approve of the job of the vignette candidate.

Table 4.3 shows that respondents rated the competent candidate's job in office as high (63.61) and the incompetent candidate's job as moderate (38.68). That is, a competent candidate's job approval is about 25 points higher than that of an incompetent politician. This finding suggests that the competence treatment was effective in boosting up job approval for vignette candidates.

Table 4.3 Job Approval by Candidate Competence

	Job Approval	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Intervals
Incompetent	38.68	0.94	25.79	[36.85 - 40.52]
Competent	63.61	1.04	28.98	[61.56 - 65.66]
Difference	-24.93***	1.40	30.14	[-27.68 - -22.18]

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

If the experimental prompt was indeed effective, why then does competence influence corruption effects in two different directions? It is possible that are there two different mechanisms at work in Colombia and Peru. To recapitulate, I have shown that voters in Peru apply larger penalties for corruption to incompetent politicians, in the direction the tradeoff hypothesis would suggest (enchantment mechanism). Meanwhile, in Colombia, competent politicians are more

harshly punished than incompetent ones (disappointment mechanism). One plausible explanation is that citizens might take competence in public works provision as a sign of greater opportunities for corruption.

In other words, it is possible that the explanation lies in the misgivings of citizens about public works provision as a potential source of corruption. There is not much evidence of the mistrust with public works in the existing literature about corruption, but I suspect that it is possible that larger corruption effects in competent politicians could be explained in part by the fact that public works competence would sometimes signal greater dishonesty in government, in particular if such government spending happens in a context of low state capacity (Bustikova & Corduneanu-Huci, 2017). National representatives and local authorities frequently claim credit for the construction of public works benefiting their constituencies, which is a type of government activity that often involves arrangements between public officials and constructions contractors. As a politician in Latin America, showing the savvy to navigate the inefficient government apparatus of weak national states could sometimes signal greater dishonesty.

We know voters could suspect corruption because public works provision is particularly susceptible to kickback schemes (Kenny, 2009; Locatelli, Mariani, Sainati, & Greco, 2017). The public procurement system is often plagued with secretive arrangements between public officials and construction contractors. In fact, the central actor in one of the largest recent corruption scandals in Latin America is the international giant Odebrecht, a construction company that has admitted to paying some $800 million in bribes to public officials across the region.

4.4 Discussion

I begin this chapter by presenting the main effects of corruption on vote intention. I find that, contrary to what some literature about electoral accountability in developing countries would suggest, voters are not cynical or passive toward corruption. In fact, they are willing to apply large electoral penalties to politicians suspected of being involved in bribe-taking, one of the most common forms of abuse of public office for private gain.

Given that Colombia and Peru have historically suffered from impunity and weak rule of law, a 19-point reduction in electoral support is quite a remarkable effect of corruption. It demonstrates that when presented with a realistic electoral setting, and when an unobtrusive method for capturing vote intention is used, citizens would rate a candidate with a corrupt record as much worse than one with an honest record. This piece of evidence suggests that citizens are the opposite of apathetic, challenging a long tradition of public opinion studies that characterize the Latin American voter as fundamentally acquiescent regarding corruption matters.

In the second section of this chapter, I identified and tested one particular form of tradeoff between corruption and economic performance that distinctly embodies the puzzle of voters condoning corrupt politicians: precisely how would candidate competence in public works provision influence electoral support for a corrupt politician? I found that the magnitude of the effect of corruption is conditional upon the candidate's perceived ability to provide public works (a "soft" tradeoff), but the direction of the effect is mixed.

In the Peruvian sample, rather than exacerbating the costs of corruption, public works provision mitigates the negative effects of corruption on vote (enchantment mechanism). This outcome is in line with what the tradeoff hypothesis suggests about the exchange of economic

gains for corruption, yet it remains contrary to what a recent empirical study that uses experiments to test this hypothesis has found so far (Esaiasson and Munoz, 2014). Adding further nuance to the discussion, this finding indicates that punishment for corruption is not necessarily negated by candidate competence, but that citizens apply a smaller penalty for corruption if a politician has the reputation of being an efficient public manager.

Therefore, instead of a "strong" version of the tradeoff mentality, in which voters prefer a corrupt but competent candidate to an honest but incompetent one, the evidence suggests that voters may evaluate corruption of competent politicians in a qualitatively different manner from that of incompetent ones (a "soft" tradeoff). Far from being fully acceptant of corruption, nevertheless, voters quietly resist it by taking cues from competence traits in candidates to decide when and how to penalize a corrupt politician. In fact, voters seem to be applying selective penalties for corruption.

In the Colombian sample, furthermore, this quiet resistance appears instead as an overt rejection of public works being used as a shield against responsibility for corruption (disappointment mechanism). Rather than helping Colombian politicians suspected of bribe taking, public works provision makes them more vulnerable to losing votes. Citizen responses in this Colombian sample appear to be more negative when an allegedly corrupt politician delivers a lot of public works to their constituency than when they deliver few. I attribute these contradictory findings to voter misgivings about government spending in infrastructure projects.

A provisional conclusion from the evidence presented in this chapter is that if the failures of electoral accountability were at all related to public attitudes toward corruption, they certainly would not be driven by general apathy towards corrupt politicians. The sources of the failures of electoral accountability may instead be related to contextual factors that render punishing

corruption a much less attractive strategy to voters. In the following chapters, I will examine two different reasons why punishing corrupt politicians might be a suboptimal strategy: perceptions of widespread corruption and the clarity of electoral alternatives.

5.0 Does Widespread Corruption Inspire Resistance to or Acceptance of Corrupt Politicians?

The previous chapter revealed that candidate provision of public goods has mixed effects on citizen attitudes toward corruption. While in Peru, I observed that corrupt politicians who provide public works are partially shielded from electoral losses (enchantment mechanism), in Colombia, corrupt politicians who are competent in delivering public works tend to lose *more* electoral support than incompetent corrupt politicians (disappointment mechanism). Finally, the chapter claimed that the relationship between corruption and public works provision is highly dependent on context. In this chapter, I turn to evaluate a crucial context-dependent explanation for electoral accountability failures: perceptions of widespread corruption. Importantly, the chapter shows that accountability still functions even when citizens expect politicians' malfeasance.

Can perceptions of widespread corruption explain the electoral survival of corrupt politicians? On the one hand, citizens in settings where corruption is normalized may reject corrupt politicians because of the costs that recurrent bribing and bid-rigging incur on their pockets and the national economy. On the other hand, citizens in highly corrupt settings may ignore politicians' records of corruption because of their habituation to seeing corruption in public office. The existing literature has not yet allowed us to test these two opposing expectations. This chapter explores the unresolved puzzle of the relationship between widespread corruption and voter attitudes toward corrupt politicians.

To answer the question of whether perceptions of widespread corruption undermine electoral accountability, I again analyze the two original survey experiments in Colombia and Peru

described in chapter 3. Within each survey, I randomly assign individuals to an experimental setting of widespread corruption. I take advantage of the pre-existing intra-national variation of perceptions of corruption in each country to effectively manipulate respondents' beliefs about the prevalence of the problem of corruption. I find that widespread corruption does not undermine electoral accountability. Respondents in both nations rejected corrupt politicians when randomly assigned to the highly corrupt experimental condition, and the rate of rejection was not significantly smaller in this condition than in a comparable experimental condition of limited corruption.

I organize the chapter as follows. First, I present the puzzle of the relationship between widespread corruption and electoral accountability. Then, I discuss recent works in support of the intuition that widespread corruption might undermine electoral accountability (i.e. normalization mechanism). Third, I present the reasons why we should instead expect that citizens in highly corrupt settings would resist accepting corrupt candidates (i.e. indignation mechanism). Fourth, I present the empirical strategy I use to test these two hypotheses. Fifth, I present the experimental results suggesting there is no evidence that widespread corruption eliminates or moderates electoral penalties for corrupt politicians. Finally, I discuss the findings by reflecting on how growing public concern about corruption in both nations appears to engender citizen resistance rather than cynicism.

5.1 The Puzzle of Widespread Corruption

The existing literature on voter responses to corruption suggests that citizens' attitudes

toward corruption should vary depending on the type of social environment in which citizens live. This intuition has received considerable attention in the recent wave of corruption studies and has motivated new studies on social tolerance of corruption and political acceptance of corrupt politicians. But the reasoning behind the idea that widespread corruption undermines electoral accountability is underspecified and supporting evidence is incomplete. As a result, we do not have a clear answer as to whether we can attribute electoral survival of corrupt politicians to widespread corruption. Can widespread corruption undermine electoral accountability?

On the one hand, citizens in highly corrupt environments are particularly sensitive to the problem of corruption and aware of how much corruption affects the quality of government. They are dissatisfied with how much embezzlement by public officials costs the national economy, and irritated about how much repeated bribe-taking costs their own pockets (Avenburg, 2017; Bohn, 2012; Hellman et al., 2000; D. Kaufmann, 1997; Kostadinova, 2009). Sometimes they are worried about the levels of corruption among the political elite and ready to speak out against corrupt politicians. While they may be willing to put up with the existence of bribery in their daily life, such tolerance does not preclude them from showing resistance to corrupt politicians' electoral ambitions.

On the other hand, however, an emerging strand of the literature argues that electoral accountability in highly corrupt environments is very difficult. They argue that citizens living in such conditions might be so accustomed to corruption that they would not find it unusual or reprehensible that a corrupt politician is attempting to win an elected office (Arias, Larreguy, Marshall, & Querubin, 2016; Bauhr & Charron, 2018; M. Klašnja & J. A. Tucker, 2013; Pavão, 2018). Citizens would overlook candidates' records of corruption because they would not find such behavior surprising or would not consider it a sufficiently distinctive candidate trait to guide

their voting decisions. As a result, voters in highly corrupt settings would rather ignore corruption and base their vote decision on other issues.

There is a debate, therefore about whether voters in highly corrupt environments are sensitive to politicians they perceive as corrupt. Will they be less inclined to punish corrupt politicians given that they expect bad behavior, or will such circumstances make voters more inclined to reject politicians where there is even a hint of corruption?

5.2 Does Widespread Corruption Undermine Electoral Accountability?

An emerging strand of the literature on corruption suggests that widespread corruption should make electoral accountability less likely. High societal levels of corruption would motivate citizens to ignore corrupt politicians, because the normalization of a bribing culture would make them indifferent to and accepting of corruption. In high corruption environments, voters would underemphasize the wrongdoing of a corrupt candidate because of the large probability that other electoral alternatives would also be corrupt, and because of the prospect that any honest candidate would not remain upstanding for a long time. Therefore, when voters' prior expectations are that corruption is a normalized practice, new information about one official's honest or dishonest behavior might be overlooked.

Several experimental studies have examined the social norms surrounding corruption and found that as corruption becomes a normalized social practice, individuals are more likely to engage in it and less likely to denounce it. Corbacho, Gingerich, Oliveros, and Ruiz-Vega (2016) find, in an experiment embedded in a household survey in Costa Rica, that citizens are more willing

to bribe a police officer when they perceive a high level of corruption in society. The insight of their contribution is that corruption is a self-reinforcing prophecy, such that the more prevalent an individual believes corruption to be, the more likely this individual will be to participate it him or herself. Similarly, Barr and Serra (2010) find that among undergraduate students at Oxford University, individuals' propensity to bribe someone was associated with the level of corruption in their home countries. Moving from analyses of propensity to engage in corruption to a propensity to denounce it, other studies focus on tolerance. Cameron, Chaudhuri, Erkal, and Gangadharan (2009) find that greater exposure to corruption in daily life builds greater tolerance of corruption. Based on experiments conducted in four countries, they find a substantial cross-country variation in retribution for norm violators, leading them to report that people may be less willing to punish corruption when they see it in others. These studies have in common that the high number of people that seem to practice corruption, and seem to accept it, reinforces corruption in highly corrupt environments. In other words, they argue there is a strong inverse relationship between tolerance and denunciation.

A related explanation for weak electoral accountability in highly corrupt environments is based on voters' prior beliefs. If voters expected the worst of all politicians, finding that one politician is corrupt would not necessarily influence their voting preferences. Disseminating corruption information, therefore, would not make all voters more likely to reject incumbent governments. In fact, voters could update positively –i.e. in favor of the corrupt incumbent– if the exposed corruption was less serious than they originally expected. This is what Arias et al. (2016) found in a field experiment in Mexico, that exogenous corruption information did not reduce support for incumbent local governments; in fact, on average, reports of corruption increased support. To many voters in highly corrupt environments, Arias et al. (2016) go on to explain, the

exposure of corruption in government is seen as unsurprising. Using notions of Bayesian updating, they rationalize their unexpected finding in Mexico by noting that the effect of corruption depends on voters' prior beliefs. In other words, when voters have low expectations of politicians, receiving news of malfeasance in government would only change their political allegiance if the revealed corruption were worse than expected.

In the same vein, when voters have negative expectations about governance, they do not integrate information about one corrupt politician into their voting calculus. In highly corrupt settings, voters overlook corruption accusations against a politician because they place a smaller value on the integrity dimension of a candidate character. When voters perceive that corrupt politicians abound and that honest ones are scarce, they lower their expectations of integrity in office and settle for good performance in other dimensions. Klašnja and Tucker (2013) present this logic briefly in the concluding remarks of their study on corruption in Europe. After finding that voters in Moldova are more likely to condone corruption than voters in Sweden, they explain the incongruence by arguing that corruption was not surprising news to voters in Moldova: "In this environment, a bad record on corruption is not news; it carries little information about the politician beside the fact that on corruption they are more of the same." In other words, Moldovans are trapped in a bad corruption equilibrium (Ashworth 2016).

Pavão (2018) has recently developed a theoretical logic and a first experimental test for this intuition. A record of corruption should matter less to citizens in highly corrupt environments because voters would not see differences among electoral alternatives. Citizens in highly corrupt environments are indifferent to corrupt politicians because they expect many politicians to engage in irregular behavior in public office, making them more skeptical of the political elite's ability to

fight corruption and refrain from it.[55] More precisely, Pavão (2018) argues that in these circumstances, citizens would ignore any corruption accusations against candidates because they would not be able to set these corrupt politicians apart from the standard politician. To empirically test this argument, Pavão (2018) designs an ingenious experiment and finds that prompting individuals to think that corruption is very high in their country makes them more tolerant of political corruption.

Putting together these studies, the emerging evidence suggests that the degree of corruption present in society affects citizens' electoral reactions to new cases of corruption. Voters would overlook corruption accusations when they perceived that the practice of corruption was so widespread that all candidates were likely to be corrupt or that throwing one rascal out would do little to reduce corruption in society. The present chapter, therefore, extends the proposition that prior beliefs about societal levels of corruption matter for tolerance of corrupt acts (Pavão, 2018; Cameron et al., 2009) and for willingness to engage in corrupt acts (Corbacho et al., 2016), to the study of how the pervasiveness of corruption in society influences the individual decision to electorally punish corrupt acts of officeholders. This discussion yields the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5.1: (Normalization Mechanism) Voters are less likely to punish corrupt politicians in highly corrupt environments than in societies with limited corruption.

[55] "When corruption is widespread, more politicians are likely to be implicated in it, which in turn fosters the perception that politicians are indistinguishable when it comes to either fighting corruption or refraining from it" (Pavão, 2018, p. 1004).

5.3 Does Widespread Corruption Inspire Resistance?

However, there are several reasons to doubt that widespread corruption should necessarily undermine electoral accountability. The reasoning behind the idea that the normalization of corruption might make citizens indifferent to corrupt politicians is incomplete. Some important features of the relationship between widespread corruption, tolerance of corruption, and electoral denunciation are omitted from the existing studies, and the current empirical evidence is inadequate.

First, it is not clear that the acceptance of bribing as a normalized practice should readily translate into indifference towards corrupt politicians. A highly corrupt setting would entail high incidence of bribing, rigged bidding, and other corrupt practices in which citizens would often engage without fear of exposure. But the social acceptance of bribery, as a common understanding between public officials and citizens, should not necessarily lead to the acceptance of corrupt politicians. It may be that agreeing to bribes implies a level of complicity between a citizen and a public official, a form of arrangement in which each party resolves to remain silent about the illegal transaction. But the absence of denunciation of forms of petty corruption does not prevent citizens from denouncing grand corruption in the political elite.

In fact, we should expect that citizens would strongly reject corrupt politicians in settings where they are more often victimized by corruption. Citizens in highly corrupt environments tend to be disgusted by recurrent exposure to irregular behavior in public office.[56] While corruption is

[56] The consequences of corruption victimization remain understudied, but a study by Seligson (2006) shows that direct exposure to corruption reduces belief in the legitimacy of the political system.

a regular practice in their routine dealings with the state, citizens view corrupt politicians with great concern. Corruption is undoubtedly expensive. Paying bribes is particularly costly for poor citizens whose access to public services such as education or health is restricted by corrupt officials' discretionary use of public resources (Azfar & Gurgur, 2008; Gupta & Tiongson, 2000). Corruption is also costly for business owners, who are often expected to pay bribes to a series of gatekeepers in public offices when contracting with the state (D. a. Kaufmann, Batra, & Stone, 2003). These citizens often see themselves as prey of corruption. This situation helps us understand the paradox of a citizenry that penalizes corruption in the political elite while accepting it in their daily lives.

Second, it is not clear whether multiple exposures to corruption on daily news would make citizens insensitive to corruption or rather hypersensitive to it. When a citizen repeatedly hears that high-level officials are being prosecuted for malfeasant public expending, does she become accustomed to it or does she become outraged? The normalization of corruption can make citizens hypersensitive to the issue of corruption (Bohn, 2012). Rather than unresponsive, these citizens could therefore become irritated and fueled by the numerous reports of corruption in public office (Avenburg, 2017; Bonifácio & Ribeiro, 2016; Kostadinova, 2009).[57] They could begin to see corruption as an urgent social problem in need of a political solution.[58] Even if repeated revelations of corruption in public office would hardly represent surprising news, these disclosures could shed

[57] Avenburg (2017) found that both corrupt victimization and perceptions of corruption increase societal participation in protests in Latin America.

[58] Streets protests against government corruption were especially common in Latin America in between 2014 and 2017 surrounding the last wave of corruption scandals in the region, particularly in Brazil, Honduras, and Guatemala. Corruption scandals also triggered massive street demonstrations during the nineties and played an important factor in presidential impeachments (Pérez-Liñán, 2007).

new light on the dimensions of corruption and could help citizens assign direct responsibility to individual politicians.

In reality, citizens who expect that a large proportion of politicians to be involved in corrupt dealings place high value on candidates' integrity credentials. If honest politicians are scarce, citizens might demand more of their politicians and electorally punish those with poor integrity credentials whenever they identify one on the ballot. Citizens may indeed have low expectations of politicians, but they might wish to place in higher-office clean politicians who would not interfere with the work that prosecutors and attorney generals perform in exposing corruption. While widespread corruption could indeed make citizens more skeptical of the political elite's ability to fight corruption, the constant exposure of corruption may also increase citizen optimism about the citizens' ability to fight corruption. A renewed need for independent monitoring and active judicial institutions would further motivate voters' rejection of alleged corrupt politicians in highly corrupt environments.

Recurrent exposure to corruption, moreover, may make the issue of corruption an important national problem. Anti-corruption policies may become a central electoral issue and thus may lead voters to support personalities who espouse a strong anti-corruption rhetoric. They may use a politician's record of corruption to evaluate which politicians are in fact able to enact anti-corruption policies. Those accused of corruption would be the least likely to ensure the independence of investigative institutions and might be suspected of wanting to strip these institutions of the powers they have to fight corruption. Voters in these circumstances could hope that honest politicians, by contrast, would be less likely to undermine these institutions. As a result, rather than losing all hope of finding clean candidates, citizens would actively search for and

reward them. If this hypothesis were correct, integrity concerns would be a prime factor in explaining how citizens decide their vote in corrupt settings.

A third problem with existing claims about the detrimental effect of widespread corruption on electoral accountability is that they assume that social tolerance of corruption implies a complete absence of denunciation. To see corruption as a fact of life does not mean citizens accept that bribery should not be penalized. In reality, citizens often become much more punitive of public officials' corrupt behavior when corruption is believed to be too widespread.[59] Putting up with the existence of corruption or other behaviors that one dislikes does not equate to excusing disliked behaviors. Actually, tolerance of corruption highlights the capacity of citizens to endure continued subjection to an adverse situation. [60] But bravery to endure in a highly corrupt environment does not preclude individuals from resisting corrupt politicians. Some citizens may be resigned to the idea that corruption is endemic, or that the best we can hope for is to restrain its level to a "just amount."[61] But this form of resignation does not indicate exoneration of blame on the part of corrupt politicians. Even in highly corrupt settings, when people accept corruption as a normal practice, they may apply electoral penalties to corrupt politicians.

Another problem, directly stemming from the previous one, is that empirical evidence is incomplete. Even though there is a conceptual gap between socially accepting corruption and refraining from denouncing it electorally, empirical studies use tolerance of corruption as a proxy

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[59] Public support for strengthening the penalties for public corruption, such as increased jail time or banning politicians from ever running for office again, is on the rise (Tiempo, 2018).

[60] For an extended discussion about the nuances of the concept of tolerance of corruption see (Pozsgai Alvarez, 2017).

[61] A former president of Colombia, Mr. Turbay, once famously said: "Tenemos que reducir la corrupción a sus justas proporciones.", or in English: "We need to reduce corruption to its just proportions."

for electoral acquiescence. Pavão (2018) explicitly points out that she uses "tolerance toward corruption as an attitudinal proxy for voters' willingness to support a corrupt politician" (p. 79). To my knowledge, no existing study on the puzzle of widespread corruption has directly observed voting intentions. The only study addressing the issue of widespread corruption and electoral attitudes toward corrupt politicians was Klašnja and Tucker (2013)'s. However, they were unable to separate levels of widespread corruption in Moldova from other institutional and historical factors in the country.

Finally, some of the claims about the irrelevance of corruption in settings of widespread corruption seem to be out of sync with contemporary affairs. In particular, these empirical findings are at odds with the recent wave of citizen upheaval and public denunciation of corruption. In a recent report by Transparency International, based on a region-wide survey about corruption, it was found that people are willing to speak out against corruption. The report shows that about six in ten citizens think reporting a case of corruption is socially acceptable. They also found that a large majority of citizens agreed ordinary people could make a difference in the fight against corruption.[62] Moreover, elections in recent years revolved around the issue of corruption. We observed that citizens voted for candidates who espouse a strong anti-corruption rhetoric, outsiders and insiders, from the right and the left of the ideological spectrum (e.g. Jair Bolsanaro in Brazil and Manuel Lopez Obrador in Mexico). Politicians in highly corrupt environments appear to be using the rhetoric of cleaning up politics of corruption as a successful electoral tool.

[62] "Citizens in Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay were the most likely to agree that citizens could play a role in fighting corruption (from 76 per cent to 83 per cent). This compares starkly with Chile, where only around two in five agreed (41 per cent)" (Transparency, 2017).

To recapitulate, the claims about the relationship between widespread corruption and electoral accountability are underspecified. In spite of the normalization of corruption, citizens might in fact resist to corrupt politicians. First, widespread corruption entails high corruption victimization, and intense bribing increases citizen discontent. Second, perceptions of a high incidence of corruption also entail recurrent exposure to corruption, which may in turn help voters to picture the true scope of corruption and to identify corrupt politicians. Moreover, social acceptance of corruption does not necessarily imply a complete absence of denunciation. Tolerance of corruption, even where it is common, does not preclude individuals from resisting corrupt politicians, especially in electoral settings. Finally, the claim that citizens who believe that all politicians are corrupt would refrain from punishing corrupt politicians is inconsistent with the observation that more citizens today are willing to speak out against corruption, and with the fact that electoral candidates use anti-corruption rhetoric to win votes.

In conclusion, citizens in highly corrupt environments may in fact punish corrupt politicians rather than ignore them. Even if they tolerated corruption in their daily lives, and even if they expected that all politicians were corrupt, they should still punish a corrupt politician and reward an honest one. This discussion yields the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5.2: (Indignation Mechanism) Voters will still punish corruption in highly corrupt environments, and the penalty will not be smaller in highly corrupt environments than in societies with limited corruption.

5.4 Empirical Evidence

5.4.1 Data and Methods

This chapter draws from data of the two original survey experiments described in chapter 3 that were deployed in Colombia and Peru, two low-middle income countries with a long history of corruption and weak rule of law.[63] In addition to the reasons discussed in chapter 3, mainly an open-list electoral system, low partisanship, and moderate social norms against corruption, I selected these two countries because of their intra-national variation in perceptions of corruption prevalence. Like other developing democracies, these countries have enacted reforms aiming at increasing government transparency and strengthening political institutions. As a result, levels of perceived corruption have diminished in some regions more than others.

Although corruption has become one of the most critical problems for Peruvians and Colombians in recent years, public concern about corruption varies considerably within each country. In Colombia, perceptions of the incidence of corruption are more accentuated in some regions, whereas elsewhere a minority of citizens perceives such high levels of corruption incidence. As Figure C1 in Appendix C1 shows, the proportion of citizens who think corruption is "very common" among public officials varies from 20% to 70%. Similarly, in Peru about 80% in Ucayali think that corruption among public officials is very common, whereas only about 20% think so in Moquegua (Figure C2 in Appendix C2).

Taking advantage of the large intra-national variation in public concerns about corruption,

[63] Details about the experimental design, the candidate vignette, and the survey samples, can be found in chapter 3.

I vary perceptions of corruption incidence through an experiment in two different ways. In Peru, one half of respondents were told that the constituency where the hypothetical politician was running for office was known for its "high levels of corruption," whereas the other half of the sample was told that such region was "known for its low levels of corruption." This experimental strategy intended to make salient the notion that corruption is very common in the "widespread corruption" treatment group and, conversely, that corruption is not so common in the "limited corruption" treatment group.

In Colombia, I opted for a different strategy to influence the perception of incidence of corruption. Instead of artificially creating the perceptions of corruption regarding the hypothetical region in question, I opted for making more salient the *already existing* expectations of corruption in the nation. In this way, prior to presenting respondents with the candidate vignette, one randomly selected group of respondents received a flyer reminding them of the large proportion of Colombians who think that corruption is widespread, using real information from the AmericasBarometer in 2014. The second group received a very similar flyer conveying information about public officials too, but making no mention of the existence of corruption. As shown in Figure 5.1, respondents in a "widespread corruption" treatment group were told that 83% of Colombians believe corruption of public officials is widespread, and respondents in a "placebo" group learned instead that public employees in Colombia sum up to 1 million servants.[64]

[64] For further reference, 1 million employees represent about 2% of the total population of Colombia.

Widespread Corruption Condition

Placebo Condition

Figure 5.1 Flyers for Widespread and Placebo Conditions

Before moving to the results, a word about the advantages and limitations of the experimental strategy is in order. In the Peruvian case, I opted to manipulate the corruption characteristics of the region described in the vignette, because a subject's perceptions about a hypothetical political scenario are easier to modify than their views about the environment they actually live in. Therefore, I did not attempt to manipulate subjects' expectations of corruption with regard to the district they live in, but with regard to the district where the hypothetical candidate is running for office. In practical terms, this means that the widespread corruption treatment was delivered as part of the candidate vignette. In the case of Colombia, I followed a different strategy. Assuming that overall perceptions about corruption levels of a hypothetical scenario are difficult to separate from perceptions about the actual district respondents live in, we may instead expect that it would be more effective to make more salient the notion that so many individuals in the country perceive corruption to be common among public officials. Neither of the two strategies is optimal and both have limitations, but both experimental conditions

nevertheless rely on a similar and comparable principle, that is, that people in Colombia and Peru know corruption is worse in some places than others.

Finally, to measure electoral support, I used a third-person question and asked respondents how likely would someone like them would be to vote for the fictional candidate.[65] As in the previous chapter, this variable is based on respondents' answers to a question about the likelihood of support for a vignette candidate who is randomly described to have either a corrupt or an honest record. As I mentioned in chapter 3, this dependent variable of vote intention is measured by a continuous variable ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 represents "highly unlikely" to vote for vignette candidate and 7 is "highly likely" to vote for vignette candidate. For ease of analysis, again, I re-scale it to a variable taking a minimum of 0 when the likelihood of supporting a hypothetical candidate is the lowest, and 100 when this likelihood is the highest.

5.4.2 Results and Analysis

Main Results in Peru

Are citizens lenient with regard to an official's wrongdoing when corruption is normalized? To explore hypothesis 5.1, that corruption is not penalized when it is considered a widespread phenomenon, I examine whether the corruption treatment effect is conditional on the level of corruption prevalence.

[65] See chapter 3 for more details about the wording of the outcome question in the two surveys and the advantages of a rating outcome.

Against hypothesis 5.1, that electoral accountability for corruption is less likely in highly corrupt environments, I do not find evidence of a relationship between corruption penalties and levels of corruption in the Peruvian sample. Figure 5.2 shows that the electoral punishment is slightly smaller in a setting of high corruption, though this reduction is not statistically significant. Corrupt candidates under the widespread treatment condition are penalized with 18 percentage points (-18.99 with p-value<0.01), whereas those under the limited treatment condition are penalized with 20 percentage points (-20.36 with p-value<0.01).[66] The effect of the treatment of corruption is statistically significant even where citizens expect politician malfeasance.

Although electoral penalties are, on average, 1.37 points lower for candidates running in a low corruption environment than they are for candidates running in a high corruption environment, we cannot reject the possibility that this difference is not statistically different from zero. This finding suggests that voters do not overlook the corrupt character of a candidate when corruption is widespread, and also that they do not apply a corruption penalty of a different magnitude in a context of low prevalence of corruption.

[66] See corresponding Table in Appendix C5

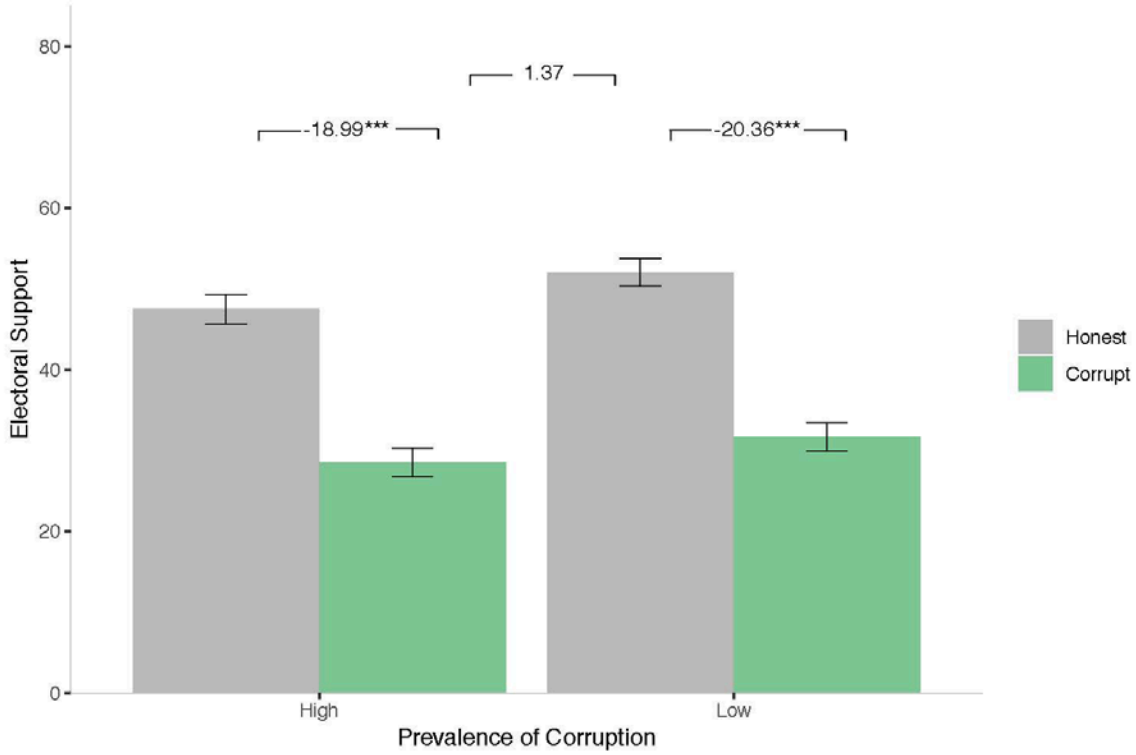


Figure 5.2 Heterogeneous Corruption Effects by High and Low Prevalence of Corruption in Peru

Main Results in Colombia

Similar to the findings from the Peruvian sample, I find no support of a mitigating effect of the context of corruption on the electoral cost of corruption in Colombia. Corrupt politicians pay an electoral price even where voters perceive that corruption is rampant, and this price is not smaller relative to a setting where voters perceive corruption is not so rampant. Figure 5.3 shows that the direction of the change in conditional effects of corruption is in the hypothesized direction but, again, the differences of corruption costs in the two settings are not statistically significant.

As I explained in the methods section of the present chapter, this finding in Colombia

comes about using a different experimental stimulus for the widespread corruption treatment. This test continued to show that accountability is unaffected by level of corruption. The detailed the results are presented in Figure 5.3. In the prevalent corruption condition, in which voters received a flyer reporting that 80% of people in Colombia believe that corruption is widespread or very widespread, the punishment for corruption is -18.94 ($p>0.01$), whereas the same punishment among the group that received a placebo flyer making no mention of corruption perceptions in the same country reaches -19.57 ($p>0.01$).[67]

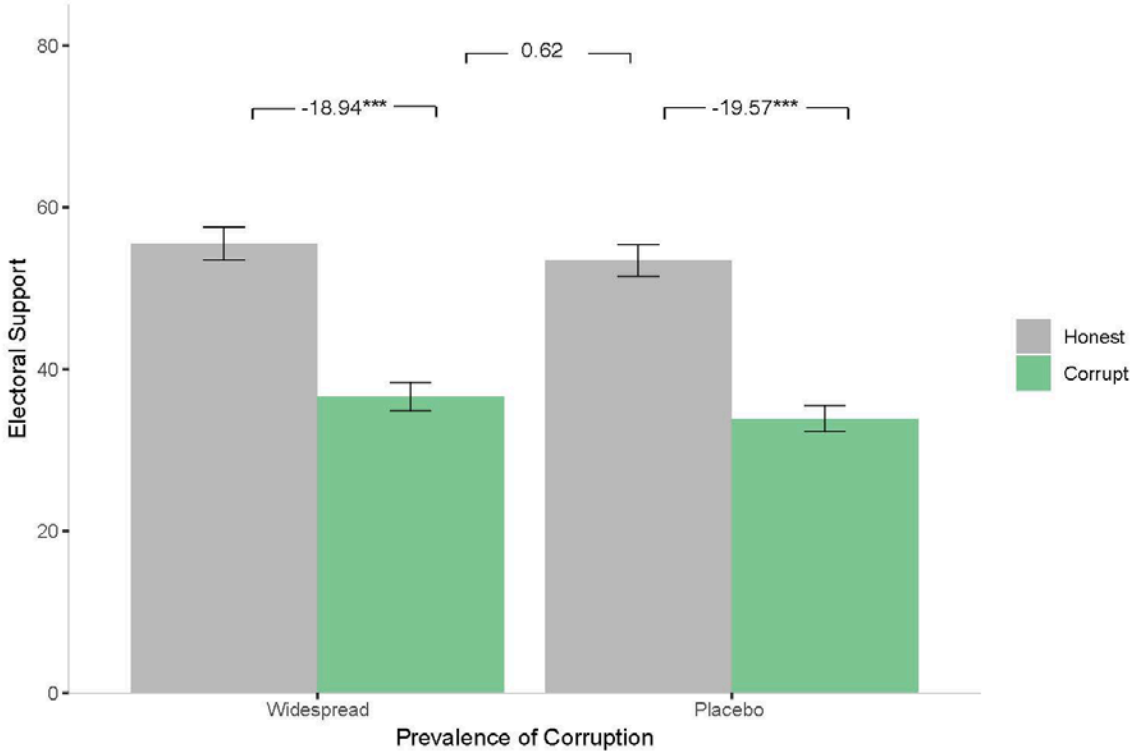


Figure 5.3 Heterogeneous Corruption Effects by Widespread Corruption and Placebo Conditions in Colombia

[67] See corresponding Table in Appendix C6.

To recapitulate, respondents in both experiments rejected corrupt politicians when randomly assigned to highly corrupt experimental settings, and the rate of rejection was not significantly smaller in these settings than in comparable experimental settings of limited corruption. In conclusion, I do not find statistically significant evidence that a context of widespread corruption moderates the impact of corruption.

To further evaluate the plausibility of hypothesis 5.1, that the price of corruption is reduced in widespread corruption settings, I analyze whether the conditional effect of corruption behaves the same way with respect to job approval as it did with respect to vote intention. To do this, I examine a question on job approval of the hypothetical candidate, based on the vignettes. Again, I find that the difference between views of honest and corrupt politicians is similar regardless of the intervention; technically, there are no heterogeneous corruption effects on job approval across levels of widespread corruption. Table 5.1 shows that among the high prevalent corruption group, the effect of corruption is 15.59 points, with job approval significantly diminishing from 58.12 to 42.53. And among the control group, the penalty for corruption is -18.44 points, reducing approval from 59.16 to 40.72. This conditional corruption effect corroborates the null finding. Across different environments of corruption, citizen tolerance of corruption appears to remain statistically similar.

Table 5.1 Heterogeneous Corruption Effects on Job Approval by Widespread Corruption and Placebo Conditions in Colombia

	Corrupt	Honest	Difference	95% Conf. Intervals
Prevalent Corruption Condition	42.53	58.12	-15.59***	[10.61 - 20.57]
Placebo Condition	40.72	59.16	-18.44***	[13.68 - 23.20]
Diff-in-Diff			2.85	

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

5.4.3 Evidence of Effective Manipulation

Effective Manipulation in Peru

Using two different manipulations of a widespread corruption setting, I found no evidence that corruption has a smaller cost when it is perceived to be widespread. The cost of corruption is statistically significant in widespread corruption settings, and it does not diminish when we compare it to settings of limited corruption. One possible explanation for a null moderating effect of widespread corruption over electoral accountability is that the experimental manipulations were unsuccessful.

To assess the effectiveness of the widespread manipulation used in the Peruvian experiment, I designed an additional poll using a sample as similar as possible to the original. This additional set of questions was conducted using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to recruit respondents from 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries. A total of 107 individuals

completed the survey (median age: 20, 45% women and 55% men) and were compensated with US$0.25 for their time.

One of the main concerns about the type of manipulation used in the Peruvian experiment is that respondents could not conceive of a region of "low corruption levels" in their country. Moreover, respondents are often not willing to listen to a detailed description of a hypothetical scenario that might not have any real consequence for their daily life. Even though the survey was conducted with well-instructed enumerators who read the text to respondents in their own households, which considerably reduced the amount of cognitive effort demanded of respondents, its artificiality might have caused respondents not to pay sufficient attention. In countries with high levels of illiteracy like Peru, having the experimental vignette read to the respondents was crucial, however it did not shield the experiment from validity issues regarding respondents' comprehension of and attention to the vignette.

To evaluate whether the experimental manipulation of widespread/limited corruption environment had an effect on respondents' perceptions of incidence of corruption, I asked a question aiming at measuring the respondents' reception of the treatment. As a check for the manipulation of the incidence of corruption, the survey asked respondents how they would they describe the overall level of corruption in the candidate's region (very high, somewhat high, somewhat low, very low). For ease of the analyses, responses were recoded into a categorical variable where the overall level of corruption was either high or low.

Figure 5.4 shows proportions of responses for the high and low incidence of corruption treatment group in the MTurk sample of responses to a question about the overall level of corruption. I found that among those in the high incidence of corruption treatment group, 86.96% subjects answered the question as expected, reporting "very high" or "somewhat high" corruption

incidence. Among subjects in the low incidence of corruption treatment, 68.53% responded "correctly," reporting "very low" or "somewhat low" incidence of corruption.

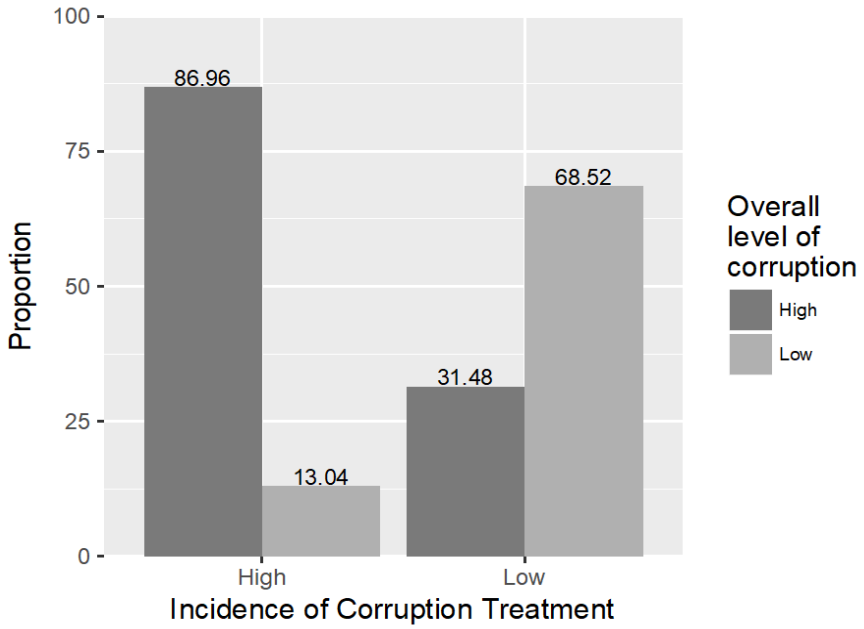


Figure 5.4 How Would you Describe the Overall Level of Corruption in Juan's Region?

A majority of subjects responded correctly to our manipulation check question suggesting that the experimental treatment was not as weak as one might think. Even though there were more incorrect answers in the low incidence of corruption group, overall more than 50% of subjects responded correctly. In general, the results suggest that manipulations were moderately effective in changing the perceptions of corruption incidence.

Effective Manipulation in Colombia

To assess the effectiveness of the widespread manipulation used in the Colombian experiment, I analyze a post-treatment item in the survey where I introduced my experiment, the AmericasBarometer 2016 national survey. I found an effect of my experimental variable on a question about the prevalence of corruption among politicians ("Thinking about the politicians in Colombia, how many of them do you think are involved in corruption?"). This evidence suggests that the widespread corruption condition in my experiments was indeed effective in changing citizens' attitudes towards corruption (See Figure 5.5).

Among those who answered that "all" politicians are involved in corruption, 54.24% were in the widespread corruption and 45.76% in the placebo condition (although these represent only 30% of respondents). Among those who answered that "a majority" of politicians are involved in corruption, 52.28% were in the widespread corruption and 47.72% in the placebo condition (these represent about 44% of respondents). Finally, among those who answered that "a minority" of politicians are involved in corruption (only 8% of respondents), 59.32% were in the placebo condition and 40.68% in the widespread condition. In conclusion, the perception that corruption is common among the political elite was slightly more accentuated in the widespread corruption than in the placebo condition. I take this as indication that the widespread corruption condition was indeed effective in shifting voters' beliefs about the extension of corruption among the political elite.

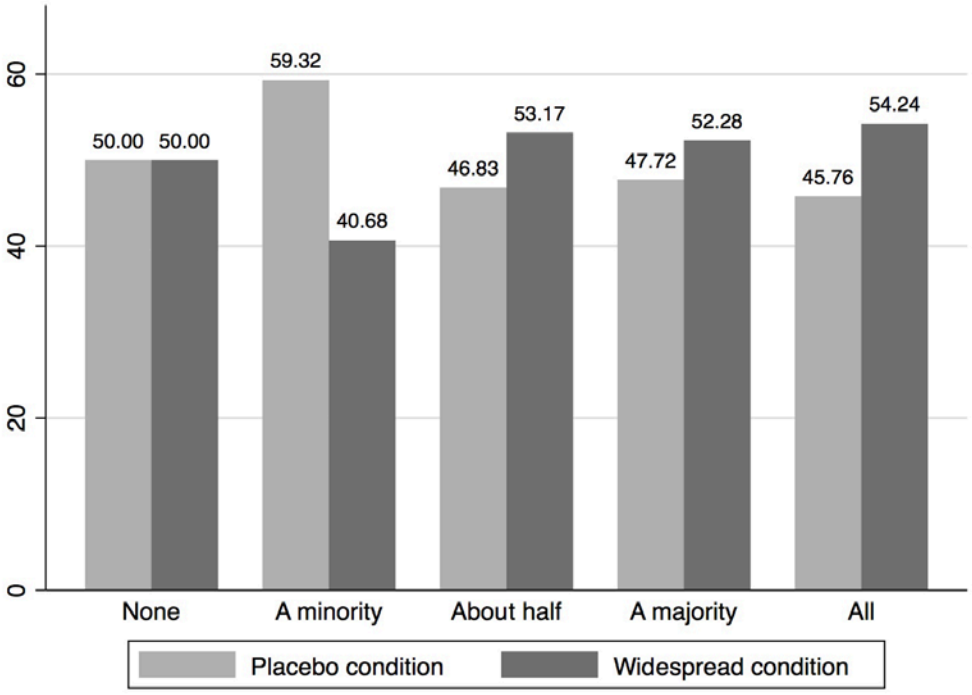


Figure 5.5 Thinking About the Politicians in Colombia, How Many of Them Do You Think are Involved in Corruption?

5.5 Discussion

Analyzing the role of the context of widespread corruption in electoral accountability for corruption, I found that an experimentally manipulated treatment of widespread corruption did not change voter responses to politicians exposed for corruption. Respondents do punish corrupt politicians even in highly corrupt environments, and citizen responses to corrupt politicians were statistically indistinguishable when going from a high corruption environment to a low corruption environment.

I found consistent evidence of this null effect using two different experimental

manipulations of the level of widespread corruption. In Peru, I used a subtle manipulation by which respondents were told that the hypothetical candidate was running in a high corruption environment, whereas in Colombia respondents received a flyer showing real survey information from 2014 reporting that 80% of Colombians rated corruption as a "widespread" or "very widespread" phenomenon. Further analysis shows that the two types of experimental manipulations were successful at modifying respondents' perceptions of the incidence of corruption. Therefore, I can confidently discard the possibility that null effects could be explained by a failed experimental manipulation.

The results of this study have implications for challenges that highly corrupt countries face in breaking the vicious cycle of corruption (Ashworth, Bueno de Mesquita, & Friedenberg, 2013). While it is generally thought that social norms reinforce the persistence of corruption, these results suggest that when voters are exposed to credible information about corrupt behavior, even in highly corrupt environments, they will punish corruption. This implication calls into question the notion that citizen tolerance of corruption in daily life readily translates to the pardoning of corrupt candidates. More studies about corruption are urgently needed in contemporary Latin America, where abundant information about government officials' malfeasance inundates the news, and where growing awareness appears to be turning cynicism into resistance.

6.0 Accountability for Corruption in Multiparty Systems: How Does Robust Party Competition Influence Voter Responses to Corruption?

In the previous chapter, I began an analysis of the role of political context in electoral accountability for corruption. I focused on how perceptions of widespread corruption may affect electoral accountability, whether the normalization of corruption inspires resistance to or acceptance of corrupt candidates. The chapter revealed that high prevalence of corruption does not undermine electoral accountability for corruption. This finding was evidence in favor of an indignation mechanism and against a normalization mechanism. Respondents in two different surveys consistently rejected corrupt politicians when randomly assigned to a highly corrupt experimental setting, and the rate of rejection was not significantly smaller in this setting than in a comparable experimental setting of limited corruption.

In this chapter, I go on to examine the central context-dependent explanation for the failures of electoral accountability that this dissertation advances. I focus now on the role of robust party competition, which was introduced in chapter 3. I propose that party competition contributes to electoral accountability because stable and competitive political parties can create expectations of clarity of alternatives, reducing uncertainty about the menu of choices. In Latin America, not all systems provide clear-cut and easily predictable alternatives to corrupt politicians. Voter anticipation of viable and predictable alternatives depends not only on the competitiveness of elections, which certainly improves voter perceptions of internal political efficacy, but also on the stability of inter-party competition over time, which boosts voter confidence in the prospect of finding relevant candidates in the next election.

In other words, the way voters evaluate corrupt politicians in multiparty systems is shaped by the nature of party competition. Whenever the party system offers a stable pattern of interaction of parties, and this competition is contested enough to offer viable alternatives with real chances of winning, the opportunities for punishing corruption increase. This type of party competition shapes voters' responses to corruption.

I distinguish a psychological effect of parties from an informational effect of parties. The former causal path refers to voters' anticipation of predictable and viable choices, whereas the latter refers to voters' ability to ascribe blame for bad performance.[68] The failure to ascribe blame for poor policy outcomes to responsible political entities is often associated with coalitional governments and with repeated demise and rise of parties (G. B. Powell, Jr. & Whitten, 1993; Schleiter & Voznaya, 2016; Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits, 2016). While weakly established party systems can undermine accountability through blame diffusion, I argue that they can also affect accountability through voter anticipation of clear alternatives. This mechanism connecting parties and electoral accountability has so far been overlooked by the literature on voter responses to corruption.

I test these arguments using different aspects of the data from the two original survey experiments in Colombia and Peru that were described in chapter 3. With an empirical design that combines the experimental randomization of corruption information and within-country variation in electoral competition, I am able to hold constant the blame attribution effects of the party system and to detect the psychological effect of party systems via the clarity of alternatives. Beyond

[68] I use the term psychological here to denote the mental state of citizens with regard to their electoral options. It should not be equated to non-rational attitudes or biased evaluations, connotations that are more typical in the political psychology literature.

responsibility attribution, I show that robust party competition can impact voters' overall responses to corrupt politicians. I demonstrate that voters are more likely to reject corruption in contexts of clarity of alternatives than in contexts of opacity of alternatives. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that clarity of alternatives creates opportunities for voters to punish corrupt officials.

6.1 Political Parties and Electoral Accountability

Political parties affect electoral accountability in many ways. We know that stable parties help voters make informed decisions. By providing party cues, political parties can help voters organize the large amount of information that they receive. When voters can discern parties' policy positions, processing new information about elected officeholders is less cognitively taxing. This means that in a crowded informational space, the role of parties in political information acquisition and processing is key for democracy. In fact, party labels can influence voters' policy concerns (e.g. Druckman (2001); Zaller (1992)), issue positions (e.g. Evans and Andersen (2004); Petrocik (1996)), and candidate evaluations (Rahn, 1993). However, partisan cues would only work in favor of electoral accountability if poorly performing governments were always of the opposing party. When damaging information about the preferred political party surfaces, citizens are less likely to weigh this information heavily in their evaluations and decisions.

Another role political parties play in generating opportunities for electoral accountability is cultivating a partisan base and mobilizing voters (A. S. Gerber & Green, 2000; Karp & Banducci, 2007). Electoral turnout is greater in settings where political parties engage in electoral

mobilization strategies, either by lowering the individual costs of acquiring and processing information, or by raising the individual or collective benefits of casting a favorable vote. Partisan electoral mobilization can reduce the likelihood that voters would opt to abstain from casting a vote. Therefore, party organizations capable of devising sophisticated electoral campaigns and effective in voter mobilization would favor electoral accountability.

Another important role of political parties in favoring – or in this case, undermining – electoral accountability is their ability to avoid or diffuse blame through partisan coalitions and brand erosion. When political parties build reputations and identities around a fixed set of partisan characteristics, voters can more easily attribute blame or credit for government performance to specific political parties (Schleiter & Voznaya, 2016). The structures of political responsibility are clearer in governments of unified partisan control (G. B. Powell, Jr. & Whitten, 1993; Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits, 2016). However, when political parties form coalitions or take stances that erode their identities (Lupu, 2016), voters face greater difficulty in distinguishing among political parties, thereby becoming less likely to punish bad performance.

While accountability for corruption can certainly be altered by parties' roles in providing party cues, investing in electoral mobilization, or favoring blame ascription, this chapter focuses on an often unexplored role of political parties: increasing opportunities to cast a meaningful vote against a corrupt candidate. Rather than being uninformed, apathetic, or unable to assign blame for corruption, voters can often blame individual politicians for very specific corrupt behaviors. However, blameworthy politicians are not always subject to electoral reprisals, and, constituencies are often willing to overlook misconduct. The clarity of alternatives is an understudied constituency-level explanation of the failures of accountability that switches the focus of attention away from the informational role of parties to a more psychological and subtler role: that is,

cultivating voters' expectations and anticipation of clearly viable and predictable electoral alternatives.

The importance of the structure of a party system has been a core concern in a number of studies of retrospective economic voting, but the notion of the clarity of alternatives has not been explicitly modeled in corruption-based voting theories. The work on conditional economic voting, for instance, looks at party system fragmentation, but scholars in this literature are mostly concerned with how multi-party systems affect the clarity of responsibility, not the clarity of alternatives (Anderson, 2000). These scholars, drawing from a longstanding tradition of studies that focus on how the institutional context affects the configuration of credit and blame, argue that coalition governments create difficulties for the punishment model of accountability (e.g. Anderson (1995, 2000); Lewis-Beck (1988); G. B. Powell (2000); G. B. Powell, Jr. and Whitten (1993); Whitten and Palmer (1999)). With a few exceptions (Anderson, 2011; Dalton & Anderson, 2011), the notion of the clarity of alternatives has been overlooked as an explanation for the differences in economic effects on government support across various countries. In a recent empirical study that contemplates the role of a party system structure in corruption-based voting (Schwindt-Bayer & Tavits, 2016), the mechanism is, again, placed on parties' roles in facilitating or obstructing blame attribution, not in their role in signaling the clarity of electoral alternatives.

In this chapter, I propose an explanation for why corrupt politicians often survive democratic elections based on a psychological role of parties. I argue that voters' ability to express discontent for corruption is greatly increased by the clarity of electoral alternatives. Predictable and viable alternatives matter for electoral accountability because they provide a fair opportunity to cast a meaningful vote against a corrupt candidate.

This chapter contributes to the literature on corruption and electoral behavior by separating the clarity of alternatives from the clarity of responsibility (see Figure 6.1). I treat the first causal path as a psychological effect of parties on accountability, and the second as an informational effect of parties on accountability. As I have already pointed out, studies have disproportionately focused on parties' effects on responsibility attribution, overlooking the role of parties in ensuring the clarity of alternatives.

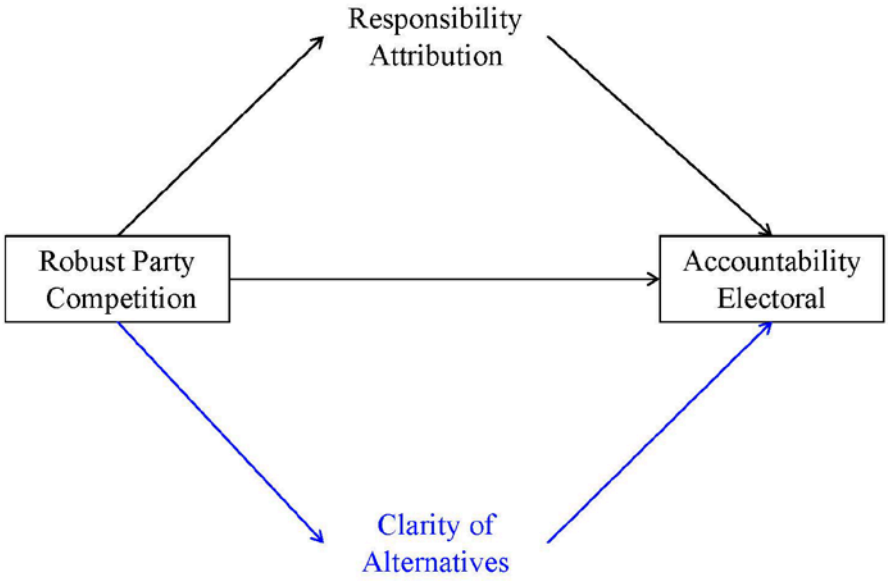


Figure 6.1 Effects of Patterns of Party Competition on Electoral Accountability

One reason for such an oversight is the methodological challenge. Empirically, it is difficult to disentangle whether the conditioning effect of party competition on corruption voting is due to the difficulty for voters to attribute responsibility or due to a lack of clarity of alternatives. Given that most studies have relied on observed measures of corruption, they have understandably asked how voters know whether the government is to blame for a country's state of corruption. In this study, I solve this methodological challenge by directly manipulating the responsibility of a

singular official for his or her corrupt behavior, which allows me to answer whether informed voters who are able to assign blame for corruption to an individual politician might still sometimes fail to hold them accountable for their misbehavior.

Another contribution of this chapter is building an indicator of the clarity of alternatives by identifying the factors that contribute to a strong clarity of electoral alternatives. Systems with electoral competition that guarantees predictable and viable electoral choices tend to be those with high levels of electoral competitiveness and high levels of party system stability. Based on this conceptualization, I generate a typology of electoral districts with regard to their type of clarity of alternatives.

As I mentioned earlier, an early notion of the clarity of alternatives was coined by Anderson (2000, 2001) to explain how fragmented party systems would make it difficult for voters to identify a clear alternative to the incumbent. But the idea of clarity of alternatives also implies that voters have known and predictable options. Thus, there are two conditions that facilitate clear alternatives to voters: stability of the party system, and electoral competitiveness. In Latin America, not all systems provide clear-cut and easily predictable party alternatives, so this stability dimension is important. In other words, the notion of party system institutionalization (Mainwaring, 2018) is contained in the concept of clarity of alternatives that I propose in this dissertation.

6.2 A Concept: Clarity of Alternatives

I conceptualize clarity of alternatives as a continuum that varies along two dimensions of party competition in a democracy: the stability of the electoral offer, and the degree of electoral

competitiveness. That is, a set of clear alternatives emerges under two substitutable conditions: stability, when voters in a district select from among firm and predictable choices, or competitiveness, when voters in a district select from among viable and feasible alternatives. These two dimensions represent substitutable conditions for the concept of clarity of alternatives. Placing an electoral district along the continuum of each of these dimensions will help us determine whether an electoral district has weak or strong clarity of alternatives. Figure 6.2 presents the two dimensions of the concept.

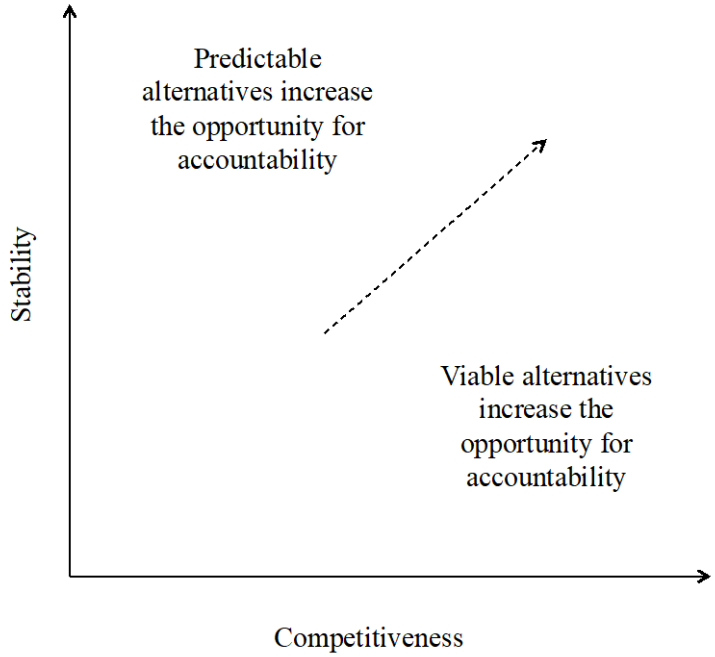


Figure 6.2 Two Dimensions of Clarity of Alternatives: Stability and Competitiveness

When either condition is met, stable party systems or contested elections, party competition in a subnational unit can be considered to offer clarity of alternatives.[69] I represent this idea with the dotted arrow in Figure 6.2 pointing at the right-upper corner. Clarity of alternatives in democratic systems can be achieved by increasing the level of party system stability (y-axis) or the level of electoral competitiveness (x-axis). Following the y-axis in Figure 6.2, the clarity of alternatives improves in electoral districts of stable political parties because the alternatives are more predictable than in highly volatile settings. Following the x-axis in Figure 6.2, the clarity of alternatives also improves in electoral districts with tight electoral races because the choices are more competitive and viable than in districts with low levels of electoral competitiveness or easy victories.

The most hostile situation for accountability arises when both conditions are at their lowest levels (closer to the origin or point in which the y-axis and x-axis meet), when elections are too uncompetitive to offer viable options, and when at the same time the party system is too unstable to offer predictable options. In this hostile condition, party competition would offer unclear alternatives to voters. I argue that this situation is associated with diminished opportunities for electoral accountability because the electoral options are both unviable (low competitiveness) and unpredictable (low stability). Here, voters will have greater difficulty in finding meaningful electoral options to punish a corrupt politician because they would be too uncertain about the menu of choices.

[69] Following (Goertz, 2006) nomenclature, this concept has a family resemblance structure, which is mathematically modeled by the operator OR or the union in set theory.

6.2.1 Types of Clarity of Alternatives

Cross-tabulating these two dimensions yields different types of electoral districts according to the type of clarity of alternatives (See Figure 6.3). There are four types of clarity of alternatives. A clearly distinguishable type can be found in the lower left corner (cell C), and other three others types can be found in the opposing three cells (cell A, B, and D). Cell C is a type of electoral district with **weak** clarity of alternatives, as I mentioned above, because both conditions, stability and competitiveness, are absent. The other three cells present types of clarity of electoral districts with **strong** clarity of alternatives because they meet the high stability condition, the high competitiveness condition, or both conditions.

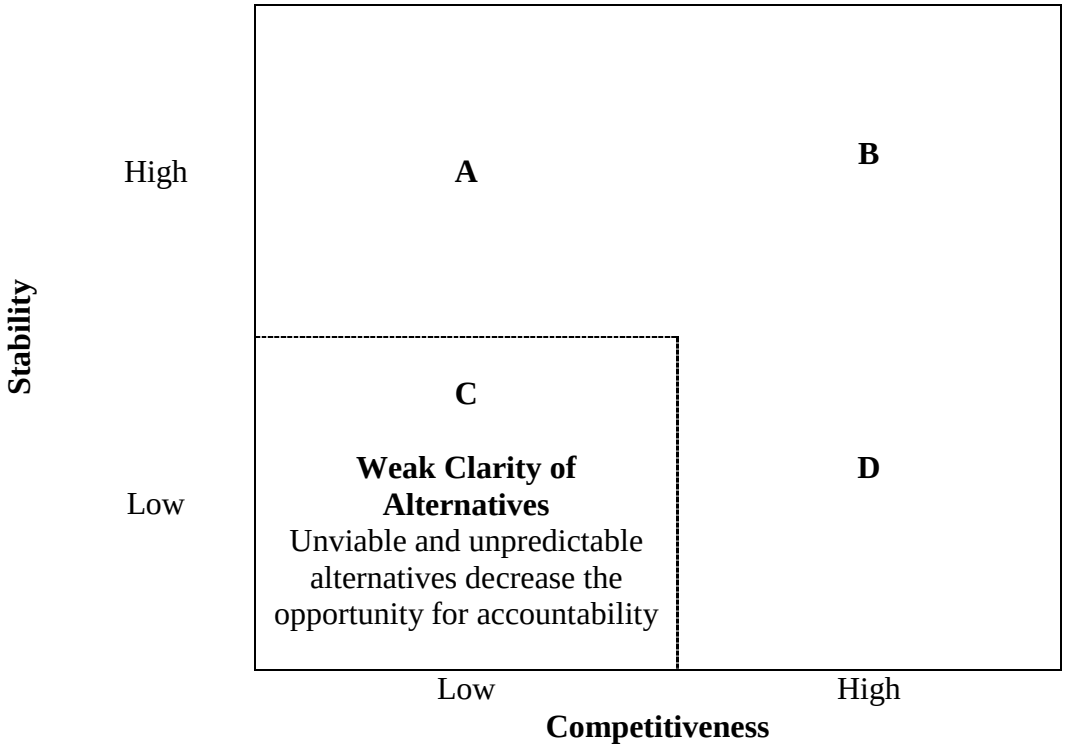


Figure 6.3 Weak Clarity of Alternatives

Now, I proceed to describe party competition in each type of district in more detail. The first type of district appears in cell C and is one that offers weak clarity of alternatives, the environment that is the least conducive to accountability. Placed in the lower left corner, a district with weak clarity of alternatives consists of cases of unstable political parties that compete in elections won by a large margin. In this corner, voting occurs in weakly competitive elections among unpredictable electoral alternatives, and races that are not close render electoral alternatives unviable contenders without real chances of winning. The confluence of the two conditions of low competitiveness and low stability make the electoral district a type of district with weak clarity of alternatives. Because this electoral district offers unviable and unpredictable electoral choices, I consider it a weak type of clarity of alternatives and expect it to decrease the opportunities for electoral accountability.

The three strong types of clarity are found in cells A, B, and D. In cell A, a district is high on the dimension of stability but low on the dimension of competitiveness, meaning that high levels of electoral stability reflect predictable party alternatives, even though some of these alternatives would not be viable competitors with realistic chances of winning. As a result, this electoral district increases the opportunity for accountability relative to a case with weak clarity of alternatives because it offers predictable options. Another type of district appears in cell D, also of the type of strong clarity of alternatives, but because of another factor: high levels of competitiveness. In this district, the competitiveness condition is high, but the stability condition is low. This means that the viability of alternatives is present, but there is not so much the predictability of such alternatives. Viable alternatives increase the opportunity for accountability relative to a case of weak clarity of alternatives. The fourth type of district appears in cell B, one

that combines both high competitiveness and high stability, therefore representing another instance of increased opportunities for electoral accountability relative to a district without clear alternatives.

6.2.2 Conceptual Boundaries

Before turning to explain in greater detail how unclear alternatives undermine electoral accountability for corruption, it is important to set some conceptual boundaries. As I have noted, the notion of clarity of alternatives was used by Anderson (2000, 2001) to refer to a single dimension of party system, fragmentation. The reason I exclude party system fragmentation (or the number of effective parties, as it is most usually operationalized) is because this factor does not strongly differentiate party competition across subnational units in Latin America. I am interested in differences across electoral units within a single country, whereas Anderson was interested in cross-national differences (particularly, the differences between bipartisan and multiparty systems). Therefore, to maximize empirical differentiation within country and to better capture the level of uncertainty with the menu of choices, I set my concept of clarity of alternatives as a function of two different dimensions: competitiveness and stability. In other words, my concept helps us understand the clarity of alternatives in already fragmented multiparty systems.

Another way in which my concept of clarity of alternatives differs from Anderson's is that I include party system stability as an important component of the concept. This inclusion is an important upgrade to the concept because I argue that we cannot take for granted that partisan organizations will always be firm and distinguishable units interacting in stable ways, especially at the subnational level. In multiparty systems in Latin America, some parties are more stable than

others. For instance, some parties have important strongholds, while other parties cannot count on constituencies showing them firm and constant support. In fact, parties' electoral strategies include shifting coalition partners, policy orientations, and party labels from election to election, which affects the intelligibility of the political offer. This fluidity is why electoral volatility is a crucial component of the clarity of alternatives concept in multiparty democracies.

Finally, as I mentioned before, the concept of clarity of alternatives is different from the notion of party system institutionalization in that voters have clear alternatives when they vote in elections characterized by either high stability or high competitiveness. Party system institutionalization does not imply high levels of electoral competitiveness.[70] The concept of clarity of alternatives, instead, integrates the two components of stability and competitiveness in order to better capture all the instances that would increase voters' expectation of clear alternatives, either because of the predictability or because of the viability electoral choices.

6.3 Does Weak Clarity of Alternatives Undermine Electoral Accountability?

How does the clarity of alternatives influence electoral accountability for corruption? I argue that weak clarity of alternatives, the joint absence of highly competitive elections and highly stable party systems, undermines electoral accountability for corruption. Any departure from the cell of weak clarity of alternatives (cell C) towards the other cells should increase the opportunity for electoral accountability.[71] Conversely, any departure from the other three cells (A, B, or D)

[70] For an update of the concept of party system institutionalization see (Mainwaring, 2018)
[71] See appendix D for a graphical depiction of this relationship.

toward a weak clarity of alternatives setting (cell C) should decrease the opportunity for accountability. This relationship can also be understood in terms of the risk of electoral impunity. We could say, therefore, that the risk of impunity increases dramatically in a setting of weak clarity of alternatives where electoral options are opaque.

In other words, we should expect that electoral accountability for corruption suffers the most in a setting of weak clarity of alternatives. When uncompetitive elections correspond with unstable competition, the electoral setting might offer voters only unstable and unviable partisan choices. An unstable pattern of electoral competition increases the risk of impunity because it prevents voters from identifying firm entities to support. Similarly, low electoral competitiveness means electoral alternatives to the incumbent are not viable. This condition of a joint absence of these two dimensions of party competition, competitiveness and stability, fundamentally changes voters' confidence in their ability to effectively punish a corrupt politician. Namely, the risk of a corrupt politician's electoral survival increases in a setting of weak clarity of alternatives because voters cannot picture viable or predictable alternatives to support. Weak clarity of alternatives signals to voters that a vote against a corrupt politician might go to waste.

The main idea behind the concept of clarity of alternatives, therefore, is that clarity can be improved with stability or competitiveness. When political parties seem viable, voters may find in them relevant electoral choices. Conversely, elections that favor the incumbent might not undermine accountability over the long run if political parties are stable and if well-known options remain open. The stability of party systems is important because it generates expectations that the fundamental contours of party competition will prevail into the foreseeable future (Mainwaring, 2018, p. 40). Firm and steady electoral alternatives are particularly important for anti-corruption

voting, because these are types of political entities with long-term horizons more likely to invest in efforts to curb corruption.

Hypothesis 6.1: (Choice Uncertainty Mechanism) Voters are less likely to punish corrupt politicians in settings of weak clarity of alternatives than in settings of strong clarity of alternatives.

6.4 Party Competition in Colombia and Peru

Party systems in Colombia and Peru share with other Latin American neighbors that they have undergone processes of substantive transformation in the past decades. This transformation has been characterized as party system deinstitutionalization in the case of Colombia (Albarracín, Gamboa, & Mainwaring, 2018; Dargent & Munoz, 2011; Pizarro Leongómez, 2002)[72] and as party system collapse in the case of Peru (Dietz & Myers, 2007; Levitsky, 1999; Seawright, 2012;

[72] Colombian politics cannot be understood without reference to one of the oldest two-party systems in the world. The Liberal and the Conservative parties emerged in the late 1840s as two programmatically distinctive parties and dominated elections until 2002. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, the dominance of both parties, which was expressed in a power sharing agreement called National Front for sixteen years between 1958 and 1974, had become too restrictive. Exclusion of other parties from meaningful political participation, along with socioeconomic and demographic changes in the Colombian society, set the stage for the emergence of guerrilla movements. In response to restricted electoral competition and to the aggravated violent conflict, democratic reforms were introduced in the late 1980s and early 1990s in order to open the political system (Bejarano, 2011). Reforms, such as political decentralization and the establishment of a nationwide electoral district for electing senators, further contributed to the electoral decline of the traditional parties. As a result, the number of parties participating in presidential elections went from 3 in 1978 to 7 in 2010. The overwhelming victory of Uribe in the presidential election of 2002 and then again in 2006 (with 53% and 31% of the votes) added further pressure on the deterioration of the Colombian bipartisan system. In the 2010 presidential elections, the Liberal and Conservative parties obtained only 6.1% and 4.4% of the vote.

Tanaka, 2006).[73] While the decline of traditional political parties has been less dramatic and less abrupt in Colombia, both countries have experienced increases in party system fragmentation and the emergence of new political parties in the past two decades.

Following a trend of party system de-nationalization and fragmentation that has been extensively documented in Latin America and beyond, patterns of party competition at the local levels differ greatly from patterns at the national level (Caramani, 2004; Harbers, 2010; Morgenstern, 2017; Morgenstern, Swindle, & Castagnola, 2009). A disconnect between local and national party politics is an important commonality that Colombia and Peru share (Milanese, Abadía, & Mandredi, 2015; Munoz & Dargent, 2017). While traditional political parties lost ground in national elections, at the local level some traditional networks survived in certain regions. In Peru, for example, APRA retained some electoral strongholds in La Libertad region. In

[73] Unlike Colombia, Peru had a weakly institutionalized multiparty system during much of its short democratic history in the twentieth century (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995). At the end of the 1980s, a severe economic crisis engendered profound voter discontent with the political class and provided a favorable setting for the emergence of outsiders. Then-president Alan Garcia, leader of APRA, one of the oldest and most organized political parties of Peruvian history, had introduced devastating economic policies that failed to control the spiral of inflation that then turned into hyperinflation. At the same time, the country was ineptly fighting the guerrilla movements Shining Path and MRTA in a conflict that, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2001-2003), took tens of thousands of lives. This chaotic scenario was capitalized on by Alberto Fujimori, an anti-establishment figure (similar to Colombia's Uribe), who gained electoral support using strong anti-establishment and 'mano dura' discourses (Levitsky, 1999). He won in the presidential election of 1990 and then again in 1995, displacing all existing traditional political parties and setting a personalistic style that would come to dominate Peruvian politics to this today. Support for traditional parties went from 89.3% in the presidential election of 1980 to 10% in the presidential election of 1995. Fujimori concentrated power in the presidency and undermined the autonomy of horizontal accountability institutions through a self-coup, closing congress and drafting a new constitution that turned the legislative branch into a single chamber assembly elected via a nationwide district. The political parties and civil society decimated by the competitive authoritarian rule of Fujimori have never fully recovered from this collapse (Vergara & Watanabe, 2016).

Colombia, the Conservative and Liberal parties also survived at the local level thanks to region-specific alliances, while enduring several splits and ideological erosion.[74] In a more recent trend, several candidates for governor and mayor do not even run under party labels; they compete as electoral movements or as a "significant number of citizens"[75] (Milanese et al., 2015). These are some of the reasons why the composition of subnational party systems varies significantly over time and across subnational units.

6.5 Empirical Evidence

6.5.1 Data

To test the hypothesis 6.1 presented in this chapter, I use two survey experiments that randomize corruption information about hypothetical congressional candidates in Colombia and Peru, two Latin American countries with similar open-list proportional representation electoral systems and weak partisan identities.[76] In both countries, candidate-centered elections should make politicians individually accountable to voters (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Crisp, Olivella, Potter, & Mishler, 2014), and weak partisanship should make candidate traits and valence issues

[74] For Morgenstern (2017, p. 65) the Colombian Liberals are the best example of a localized party, which exhibit low scores on static and dynamic nationalization measures.
[75] *Numero significativo de ciudadanos* is a modality allowing independent candidates to register their candidacy without a party label by collecting signatures in Colombia.
[76] Given that voters are allowed to cast individual votes for congressional candidates, these two countries provide politicians with strong incentives for conducting candidate-centered campaigns.

like corruption an important determinant of electoral support (Bustikova & Zechmeister, 2016; R. Carlin, Singer, & Zechmeister, 2015; Kayser & Wlezien, 2011; Lupu, 2014).[77]

To measure electoral support for corrupt politicians, I use the same outcome variable analyzed in the two previous empirical chapters. This variable is based on respondents' answers to a question about the likelihood of support for a vignette candidate who is randomly described to have a corrupt or honest record. As I mentioned before, this dependent variable of vote intention is measured by a continuous variable ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 represents "highly unlikely" to vote for vignette candidate and 7 is "highly likely" to vote for vignette candidate. For ease of analysis, again, I re-scale it to a variable taking a minimum of 0 when the likelihood of supporting a hypothetical candidate is the lowest, and 100 when this likelihood is the highest.

To measure clarity of alternatives, I use the two aforementioned dimensions of party competition: party system stability and electoral competitiveness. Given the spatial unevenness of party competition in both countries that I discussed in the previous section, I take advantage of within-country variation in stability and competitiveness to identify electoral districts of weak clarity of alternatives. I calculate a binary variable of clarity of alternatives that takes the value of 1 if party systems stability or electoral competitiveness fall below the national mean (weak clarity), and 0 otherwise (strong clarity). I use the logical OR to integrate the two dimensions discussed in the conceptualization section because, as I argued before, clarity of alternatives can increase either via electoral competitiveness or via party system stability. In terms of the typology presented in the same section, a value of 1 in the binary variable of clarity of alternatives represents cells of weak clarity of alternatives, whereas a value of 0 represents the cell of strong clarity of alternatives.

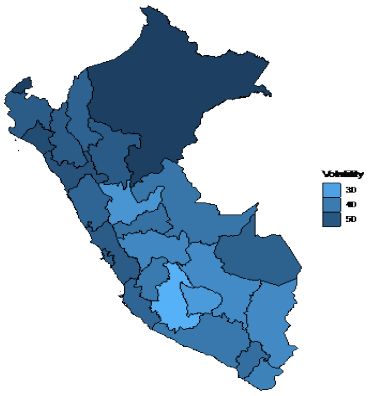
[77] See extended discussion about this in chapter 3.

The indicators I use to operationalize electoral competitiveness and party system stability are margin of victory and electoral volatility. To build the electoral competitiveness variable, I calculate the mean margin of victory in presidential and legislative elections in the two most recent presidential and legislative elections across subnational units. The margin of victory is calculated as the percentage of votes for the winning party minus the percentage won by the second-place party.[78] To measure the stability of the party system, I calculate electoral volatility of each electoral district in the two countries using voting results from the past two legislative and presidential elections. To construct electoral volatility at the subnational level, I follow the standard Pedersen index.[79]

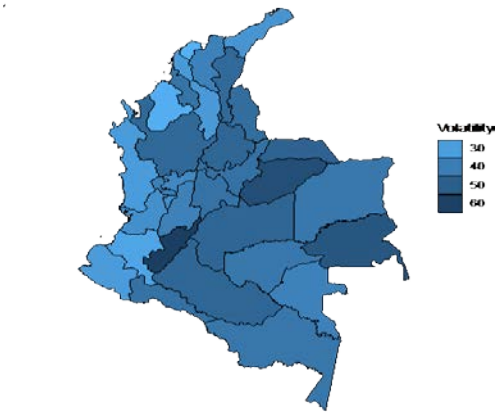
[78] It is important to point out that margin of victory might be an imperfect proxy for the level of competition in legislative elections with open lists. It could mask the amount of intra-party competition, which is sizable in proportional representation systems with open lists. Nevertheless, the conceptualization of clarity of alternatives depends on inter-party competition, therefore, party units, not candidate units. Moreover, there is no reason to think that this proxy for inter-party competition under-reports tight electoral races unevenly across electoral districts. Moreover, I opted for using this inter-party measure of party competition because I am primarily interested in how political parties' competition at the subnational level affects voters' perceptions of the available electoral choices, which may be related to any electoral race in the district (e.g. presidential and gubernatorial as well). I also opted for this measure of competitiveness because it allows me to expand this study in the future to other PR countries with close lists.

[79] For a detailed description of the two indexes and the aggregation procedures see appendix D.

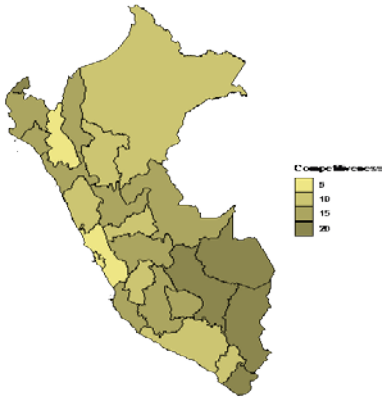
Party System Stability in Peru



Party System Stability in Colombia



Electoral Competitiveness in Peru



Electoral Competitiveness in Colombia

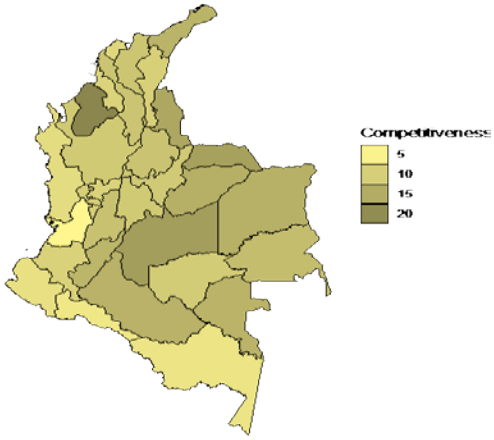


Figure 6.4 Within Country Variation of Party Competition

Maps in Figure 6.4 show how electoral competitiveness and party system stability vary greatly within each country. In Peru, some of the highest levels of volatility (low party system stability) are found in the region of Loreto (56.79%) whereas some of the lowest are found in Ayacucho (26.25%). In terms of electoral competitiveness, a constituency with some of the closest elections is Cajamarca (margin of victory of 8%), and a constituency with some of the lowest competitiveness is Tacna (margin of 30%). In Colombia, some of the highest levels of volatility

are observed in Huila (60.8%) with some of the lowest in Atlántico (24.2%), and the highest levels of competitiveness can be found in Cordoba (20.85%) whereas the lowest levels are in Valle del Cauca (4.38%).

According to the concept of clarity of alternatives, the classification of regions with strong and weak types of clarity can be found in Figure 6.5. Following this classification, Peruvian voters in regions as diverse as Loreto or Ica live in contexts of weak clarity of alternatives where citizens have high uncertainty about the menu of choices. In the case of Colombia, citizens as diverse as those living in Norte de Santander or Tolima also have problems in identifying viable and predictable electoral options to punish corruption. These regions differ greatly in terms of socioeconomic development, education rates, and size of urban population.

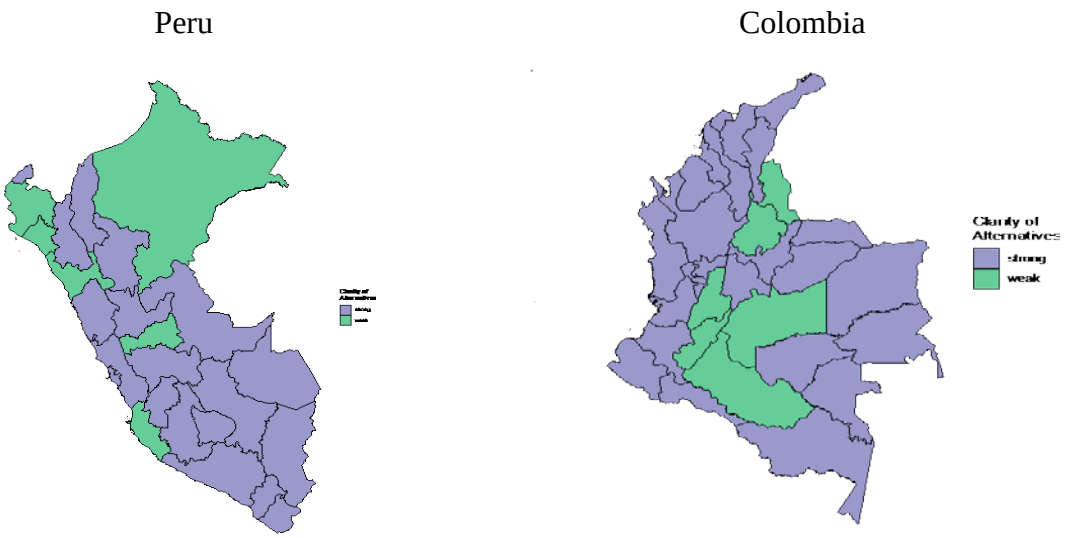


Figure 6.5 Clarity of Alternatives in Colombia and Peru

6.5.2 Methods

An important advantage of the within-country design in this study is that it allows me to hold constant the effects of macro-institutional factors that could be associated with citizen attitudes towards corruption, such as the form of government, the electoral system, or oversight institutions. More importantly, the effects of responsibility attribution are reduced by design, because the main experimental manipulation is individual corrupt behavior. Having respondents be treated with a credible corruption accusation attached to a singular politician makes this design capable of detecting a psychological effect of political parties beyond their influence on voter capacity to assign responsibility (informational effect). Any evidence of a conditioning effect of party competition structure on voting against a corrupt candidate in this design can, therefore, be confidently attributable to weak clarity of alternatives, not to the difficulty of voters in attributing responsibility for corruption.

To understand where corruption penalties emerge, therefore, I examine how differences in corruption treatment effects vary across districts of weak and strong clarity of alternatives. I argued that voters' opportunities for electoral accountability are reduced in settings where party competition offers neither predictable nor viable alternatives. This occurs in places with weak clarity of alternatives, or 'opaque choice' settings. Accordingly, this analysis should be interpreted as the heterogeneous treatment effect of corruption with clarity of alternatives as a moderator indicator. Therefore, I estimate the heterogeneous treatment effect of corruption in a regression framework with a treatment-by-covariate interaction. The quantity of interest in the analysis is the treatment-by-covariate interaction, or the δ in the following equation:

$$\text{Support}_{ij} = \alpha_{ij} + \beta\text{Corruption}_{ij} + \gamma\text{Clarity}_{j} + \delta\text{Corruption}_{ij}\,\text{Clarity}_{j} + \varepsilon_{i}$$

Where β is an indicator of corrupt candidate for individual i (1 = corrupt and 0 = honest), γ is an indicator of clarity of alternatives for region j (1 = weak clarity and 0 = strong clarity), and δ is the interaction term between corruption and clarity.

6.5.3 Results and Analysis

To understand the factors that reduce voters' willingness and ability to effectively exercise accountability, we need to understand ways in which party competition can impact decision-making. If partisanship does not provide a shield for corruption accusations in contexts of weak partisan affiliations[80], it is possible that other aspects of the nature of party competition could influence voters' evaluations of corruption accusations. Looking at the clarity of alternatives allows me to test a hypothesis about how party competition might contribute to the failures of electoral accountability. It could be the case that, as I argued in this chapter, voters are more lenient with corruption because political alternatives are unpredictable and unviable, undermining voters' readiness to cast a meaningful vote against a corrupt politician. Therefore, the following models assess how the clarity of alternatives affects electoral support for corrupt candidates.

[80] Only around 22% of respondents in Colombia declared themselves close to any political party (more than 11 parties voluntarily reported). In Peru, around 30% of the sample reported any political affinity, with more than 15 political parties also voluntarily reported. See appendix D for a supplementary analysis of partisanship and electoral accountability showing no statistical relationship.

Main Results in Peru

Models 1 through 3 show that weak clarity of alternatives reduces the impact of corruption on electoral support in Peru. The clarity model of accountability proposed in this dissertation posits that voters living in contexts of clear alternatives will be willing to punish corruption to a greater extent than those without clear alternatives. I find empirical support for the idea that the clarity of alternatives contributes to political accountability for corruption. As we move to contexts without clear alternatives, the punishment for corruption diminishes. The interaction effect has a positive sign, indicating that the negative corruption effect is moderated by the weak clarity of electoral choices. The difference between the effects of corruption under strong and weak clarity of alternatives is statistically significant.

Table 6.1 Corruption Effect on Electoral Support by Clarity of Alternatives in Peru

DV: Electoral Support	Peru		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model3
Corruption	-21.26***	-21.20***	-21.27***
	(2.28)	(2.01)	(2.28)
Weak Clarity	-3.53	-3.47	-3.53
	(2.96)	(3.28)	(3.04)
Corruption * Weak Clarity	**6.86****	**7.04***	**6.87****
	(3.39)	**(4.14)**	**(3.35)**
Constant	50.59***	50.42***	50.59***
	(1.64)	(1.76)	(1.62)
Observations	1271	1271	1271
Regions	16	16	16
Districts	75	75	75

Notes: Model 1 is a complex survey regression. Model 2 is a multilevel model with random effects at electoral district level. And Model 3 is a regression with clustered standard errors at the district level. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Main Results in Colombia

Models 4 through 6 show that weak clarity of alternatives reduces the impact of corruption on electoral support in Colombia as well. In this second study, I find empirical support for the idea that clarity of alternatives is important for political accountability for corruption, which is reassuring that the effect is not an artifact of chance or the particular distribution of the survey respondents in districts of weak clarity of alternatives in Peru. As we move to contexts of weak clarity of alternatives in Colombia, the punishment for corruption diminishes. The penalty for corruption when clarity is 0 (strong clarity) is approximately 20.78 points, whereas the penalty for corruption when clarity is 1 (weak clarity) is approximately 10.37 points (following the estimates in the table - 20.78 + 10.41 = 10.37). Alternative model specifications in Appendix D4 further provide support for this main finding.

Table 6.2 Corruption Effect on Electoral Support by Clarity of Alternatives in Colombia

DV: Electoral Support	Colombia		
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Corruption	-20.78***	-20.71***	-20.78***
	(1.79)	(2.01)	(1.63)
Weak Clarity	-4.84	-5.68	-4.84
	(5.58)	(3.93)	(5.62)
Corruption * Weak Clarity	**10.41***	**10.52****	**10.41***
	(5.63)	**(5.21)**	**(5.49)**
Constant	55.20***	55.64***	55.20***
	(1.53)	(1.63)	(1.54)
Observations	1024	1024	1024
Regions	22	22	22
Districts	47	47	47

Model 4 is a complex survey regression. Model 5 is a multilevel model with random effects at electoral district level. And Model 6 is a regression with clustered standard errors at the district level. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

The moderating effect of weak clarity of alternatives can be graphically observed in Figure 6.6 below. The punishment of corruption decreases as we move from a context of strong clarity of viable alternatives to a context of weak clarity of viable alternatives. In Colombia, voters living in contexts of weak clarity of alternatives punish corrupt officials leniently, decreasing electoral support by 10 percentage points ($p < 0.01$), and those living in contexts of strong clarity of alternatives punish corruption by 20 percentage points ($p < 0.01$). In Peru, the punishment for corruption diminishes from 21 percentage points ($p < 0.01$) in contexts of strong clarity of

alternatives to 14 percentage points ($p < 0.01$) in contexts where, on the contrary, voters cannot discern electoral alternatives.[81]

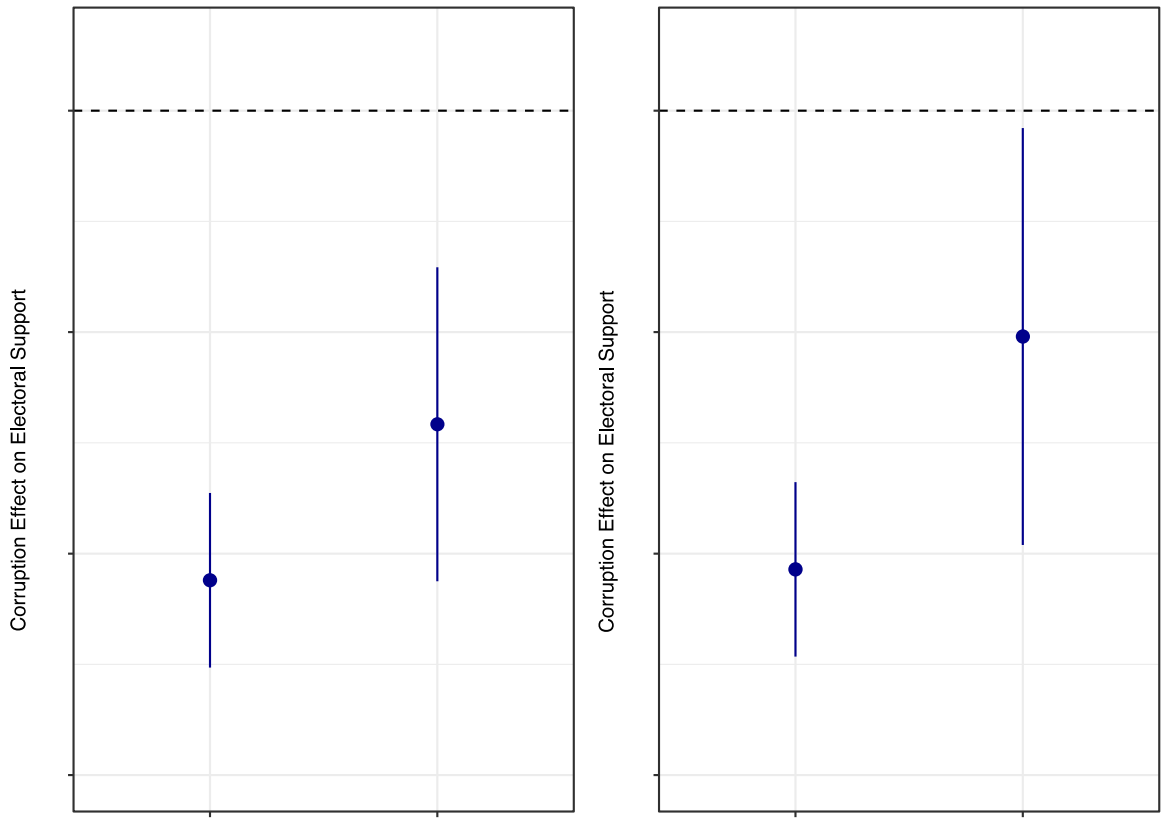


Figure 6.6 Moderating Effect of Weak Clarity of Alternatives[82]

[81] See appendix D5 for all predicted values of electoral support in Colombia in Peru. It is important to notice that even though the corruption penalty is less precisely estimated for citizens living in districts of weak clarity of alternatives (as we can tell by the large standard errors), the number of observations is not smaller than we would need for detecting a small corruption effect. About 1 in 4 of our respondents live in a "weak clarity of alternatives" district (that is, 314 in the Peruvian sample and 270 in the Colombian sample).

[82] Corruption effects plotted using Models 3 and 6, linear regressions with clustered standard errors at the district level.

It is important to note that by comparing individuals with strong versus weak clarity of electoral alternatives who randomly evaluated an honest or corrupt candidate, it is possible to capture the shifts in the willingness to support a candidate not driven by likelihood of corruption exposure, such as stronger monitoring institutions or poorly performing local economy.

The finding that the weak clarity of alternatives reduces the punishment for corruption in multiparty systems suggests that, holding constant blame for corruption, electoral penalties for individual corrupt behavior depend on the availability of predictable and viable alternatives in a given electoral district. This particular configuration of party competition has an impact on the estimated level of corruption effects. This finding is relevant for the literature on the electoral survival of corrupt officials because, while the public seems to be increasingly aware of corruption offenses, outrage and indignation are not always translated into electoral penalties. The evidence of the moderating effect of weak clarity of alternatives indicates that certain electoral settings, characterized by unpredictable and unviable alternatives, offer fewer opportunities for a meaningful vote against corruption.

6.5.4 Alternative Explanations

Next, I consider two alternative explanations for the variation in electoral accountability for corruption: the independent effect of electoral volatility, and uncontested elections. If weak clarity of alternatives were not a meaningful concept accounting for substantial variation in the magnitude of electoral accountability, we would expect to see that these other factors would instead independently reduce opportunities for electoral accountability. Can these factors explain a substantive proportion of the failures of electoral accountability?

In the first set of models, I compare respondents' electoral punishment for corrupt candidates across different levels of electoral volatility in each country. We know that opportunities for accountability may be affected when political parties are so erratic that voters cannot find firm and predictable electoral choices to support. However, I expect that volatility alone is not a moderator of electoral accountability, because in these settings, elections could be competitive as well, and competition contributes to the clarity of alternatives (see the details of this conceptualization in Section 6.2). Following the conceptualization of weak clarity of alternatives, a highly volatile setting alone does not constitute a case of opaque choice environment unless it is matched with low electoral competition.

The results confirm that highly volatile environments alone do not change how citizens punish corruption. Models 7 through 10 in table 6.3 show that our corruption treatment significantly decreases electoral support, but also that voters in electorally unstable constituencies are not significantly less likely to punish a corrupt candidate than voters in electorally stable constituencies. There is no difference in support for corrupt politicians between constituencies with predictable choices and those with unpredictable choices. The instability of electoral choices does not discourage voters from punishing corruption. In other words, party system stability does not significantly reduce accountability by itself, and this result is consistent across different measures of electoral volatility (see Appendix D5).

Table 6.3 Corruption Effect on Electoral Support by Volatility

DV: Electoral Support	Colombia		Peru	
	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Corruption	-29.84***	-29.57**	-21.28**	-21.27**
	(8.44)	(9.45)	(9.11)	(8.13)
Volatility	-0.14	-0.13	-0.09	-0.11
	(0.25)	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Corruption * Volatility	0.273	0.27	0.03	0.03
	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Constant	59.88***	59.82***	54.25***	54.74***
	(8.47)	(7.57)	(6.55)	(6.36)
Observations	1024	1024	1271	1271

Models 7 and 9 are complex survey regressions, and Models 8 and 10 are regressions with clustered standard errors at the electoral district level. Standard errors in parentheses.
*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

While the decreasing trend of corruption effects runs in the expected direction, electoral volatility does not significantly reduce accountability. Figure 6.5 presents the marginal effect of corruption at different levels of electoral volatility. The marginal effects follow a somewhat decreasing trend, but it is only modest, at least in the case of Peru. At the lowest levels of volatility (around 25%), corrupt leaders lose 24 percent points of electoral support in Colombia ($p < 0.001$), and 21 percentage points in Peru ($p < 0.001$), whereas, at the highest levels of around 75% of electoral volatility, corrupt leaders lose 11 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) and 18 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) of electoral support in Colombia and Peru respectively. It is worth mentioning that corruption effects are statistically significant at all levels of volatility but the diminishing trend is not very pronounced in the case of Peru. In fact, the decreasing trend is particularly flat in the

Peruvian case. The trend follows the same path when I use other disaggregated indicators of volatility, as shown in further analyses in Appendix D6.

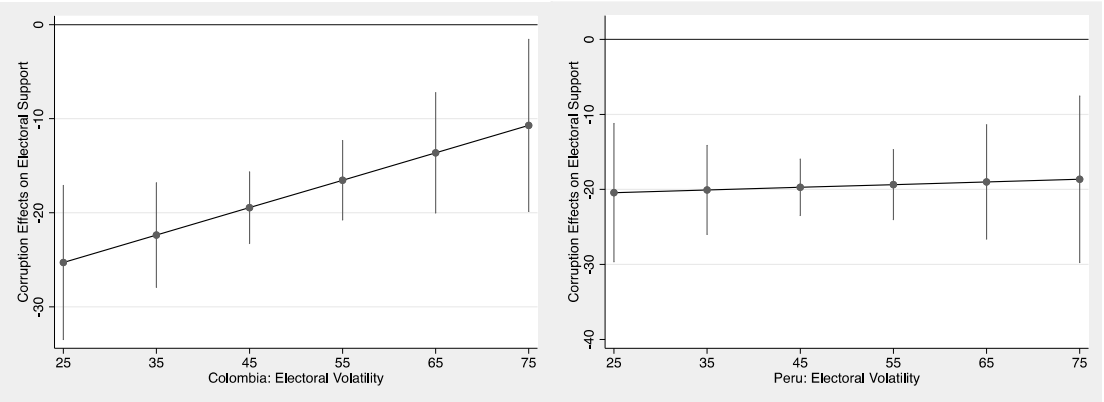


Figure 6.7 Corruption Effects and Electoral Volatility[83]

In a second set of models, I compare respondents' electoral punishment for corrupt candidates across different levels of electoral competitiveness in each country. If parties' impact on accountability for corruption is truly based on the clarity of alternatives and not merely on competitiveness, we should expect that close elections alone not be characterized by higher punishment for corruption. For my purpose, it would suffice to assess whether voters in more competitive elections are more likely to respond to corruption than voters in less competitive elections. I expect that competitiveness alone is not a significant moderator of corruption penalties, because in these settings political parties could be stable, and stability would contribute to the clarity of alternatives.

[83] Corruption effects plotted using Models 8 and 10, linear regressions with clustered standard errors at the electoral district level.

Models 11 through 14 show that penalties applied to corrupt politicians do not decrease as we move from contexts of high electoral competitiveness to contexts of low competitiveness. Elections won by a large margin alone cannot eliminate clarity. Voters in electorally competitive constituencies are not more likely to punish a corrupt candidate than voters in less competitive constituencies. The difference in the effect of corruption in constituencies with and without realistic competition is virtually nonexistent. Hence, the lack of highly competitive electoral choices alone does not automatically discourage voters from punishing corruption because voters could still find clearly predictable alternatives in stable political parties.

Table 6.4 Corruption Effect on Electoral Support by Competitiveness[84]

DV: Electoral Support	Colombia		Peru	
	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14
Corruption	-21.33***	-21.22***	-23.75***	-23.79***
	(5.74)	(5.58)	(4.17)	(4.09)
Margin of Victory	-0.02	-0.04	0.04	0.12
	(0.51)	(0.41)	(0.18)	(0.23)
Corruption * Margin of Victory	0.21	0.20	0.33	0.34
	(0.59)	(0.52)	(0.31)	(0.29)
Constant	54.29***	55.07***	49.19***	47.54***
	(5.21)	(4.50)	(2.57)	(3.49)
Observations	1024	1024	1271	1271

Standard errors in parentheses
*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

[84] Models 11 and 13 are complex survey regressions. Models 12 and 14 are regressions with clustered standard errors at the electoral district level.

Nevertheless, the declining trend in corruption effects appears to move in the same direction as declining competitiveness. As figure 6.9 indicates, there is a tendency for reduced electoral penalties for corruption under low levels of electoral competitiveness. In Colombia, when closeness of elections is the lowest (around 4% of margin of victory) the punishment rises to 20 percentage points ($p < 0.001$). Whereas when elections are not very competitive (over 18% of margin of victory) the punishment for corruption decreases to around 15 percentage points ($p < 0.001$). In the case of Peru, we can observe a similar pattern. When elections are highly competitive, corrupt politicians are penalized by around 23 percentage points ($p < 0.001$), but when elections are not very competitive, they are penalized by only 18 percentage points ($p < 0.001$).

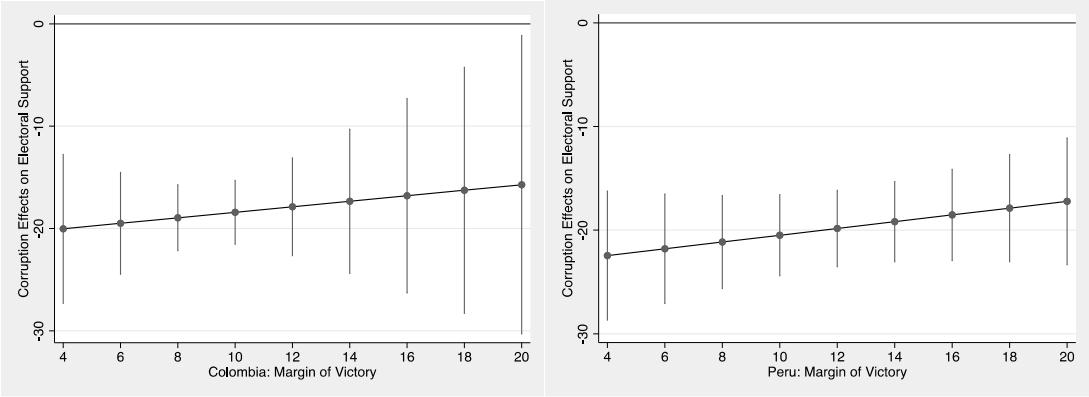


Figure 6.8 Corruption Effects and Electoral Competitiveness[85]

The findings that neither low electoral competitiveness nor volatility can independently reduce the size of corruption effects reinforce my argument that the clarity of alternatives

[85] Corruption effects plotted using Models 12 and 14, linear regressions with clustered standard errors at the electoral district level.

contributes to electoral accountability in multiparty systems. While I cannot fully discard that party effects on blame ascription and voter mobilization are plausible explanations for the observed variations in electoral accountability for corruption, the empirical evidence suggests that parties can influence voters' willingness to punish corruption through the proposed mechanism of the clarity of alternatives. Given that the present design holds blame ascription constant, the evidence that clear alternatives significantly accounts for the variation in accountability indicates that parties may have a psychological effect that has been overlooked in the literature of the survival of corrupt politicians. Overall, these pieces of evidence together suggest that the clarity of alternatives increases the opportunities for electoral accountability for corruption.

6.6 Discussion

The first goal of this chapter was to test whether changes in corruption penalties are driven by the clarity of alternatives, in order to better understand the role of political parties in electoral accountability. The literature on comparative political parties has repeatedly pointed out that political parties are essential for accountability, but it has not solved the puzzle of the ambiguous effects of parties on voters' ability to reward and punish public officials' performances. For instance, the cognitive shortcuts that parties provide should help them protect themselves from taking the blame for corruption accusations, but at the same time, strong party labels should make them more vulnerable to reputational losses. Having a distinguishable party label would make it easier for voters to assign blame when an accusation against one of its members arises. Nevertheless, partisan voters often excuse their preferred parties from political responsibility when

corruption increases. If such partisan shields are not available to their full extent in fluid party systems like Colombia and Peru, why do corrupt politicians so often survive in these contexts? I argue that responsibility attribution is not always the key to answering this question, and that the lack of clarity of alternatives might help explain why we observe an attenuated effect of corruption on voter behavior.

The second goal was to provide empirical evidence for understanding how political parties matter beyond their role in the clarity of responsibility. Extensive work focuses on how the party system structure affects dynamics of blame and credit for governmental outcomes, highlighting how the attribution of responsibility for poor performance is diluted in contexts of multiparty systems with changeable party labels. However, no existing study of corruption-based voting has focused on the psychological effects of parties, in particular, voter perceptions of the clarity of electoral alternatives. This study demonstrates that the concept of clarity of viable alternatives helps to understand vote decision-making in fluid party systems, beyond partisan effects on responsibility attribution. In particular, I argue that political parties matter because they create opportunities for meaningful votes against corruption, and I show that when clarity of alternatives is low voters are less likely to punish corrupt politicians. By using an experimental approach to manipulate corruption accusations against individual politicians, I address the empirical challenge of disentangling the evidence of responsibility attribution failures from the evidence of lack of clarity of alternatives. Holding constant responsibility attribution by design, I am able to uncover evidence of party system effects on voters' willingness to sanction corruption.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that while I am able to rule out the possibility that party competition matters for electoral accountability through weak responsibility links, I am not able to fully exclude other potential mechanisms. It might be possible that, for example, the types

of clarity co-vary with socioeconomic factors or other unobserved variables. Nevertheless, I noted that citizens living in contexts of weak clarity of alternatives do not share similar economic situations or levels of education. Moreover, the empirical evidence that I presented in the preceding chapters further supports my proposition that differential rates of electoral penalties for corruption are driven by the lack of clearly viable and predictable choices, and not by other contextual factors. Nonetheless, future research should further explore how the clarity of alternatives translates to other countries, and should gather more empirical evidence that could allow for additional tests on the potential effect of other confounders, endeavors that are beyond the scope of the present project.

7.0 Conclusions

In this concluding chapter, I first summarize the basic empirical evidence presented in the text for the argument that voter responses to corruption depend on the political context in which information about corruption is disseminated. Then, I briefly discuss some of the avenues for future research that could expand on this work. Finally, I conclude by considering the implications of this work for the literature on democratic consolidation and electoral accountability in Latin America.

7.1 Summary of Findings

The dissertation begins with a discussion of the saliency corruption has gained within the last decade in Latin America. In spite of the gains in making corruption more visible, courts take years to reach a verdict, and convictions remain rare. In a context of improved monitoring capacities of democratic institutions and citizens' high awareness of the issue of corruption, how do voters respond to exposed corrupt politicians? A brief review of the literature indicates that citizen responses to corruption are highly variable and that the sources of failures of accountability in developing countries are several. On the one hand, the monitoring literature suggests that citizens fail to punish corruption because information is sometimes absent or unreliable. On the other hand, the socio-psychological literature suggests that voters are less inclined to punish corruption cases that involve members of their own party or those that perform well otherwise. While it is well established that institutions and citizens' political identities and preferences matter

for how voters acquire and process information about corruption, it is not obvious how informed voters evaluate the corrupt or honest records of politicians in developing countries where political parties are unstable and party identities are weak. While the existing literature and anecdotal evidence would suggest that electoral accountability is generally weak in developing countries, we cannot drive causal inferences about voting attitudes toward corruption just by observing cases of corrupt leaders' electoral survival.

I then develop a theory to explain how features of the political environment affect the way voters respond to corrupt politicians. In particular, I focus on how robust party competition shapes voting attitudes toward corrupt politicians in developing countries. The literature on comparative political parties suggests that multiparty systems and divided government undermine the ability of voters to attribute responsibility to individual parties for government outcomes. But this research has not been able to separate the effect of blame from that of the clarity of alternatives. By means of a survey experimental design, I am able to estimate the effect of clearly predictable and viable electoral choices on corruption voting while controlling for the clarity of responsibility, thereby identifying an under-studied reason why robust party competition contributes to electoral accountability for corruption.

The findings of this dissertation support the theoretical proposition that voters living in contexts of weak clarity of alternatives are less likely to punish corrupt politicians. I take several steps to build evidence for this argument. First, I discard the possibility that informed voters are generally supportive of corrupt politicians and that voting attitudes toward corrupt politicians are merely the result of performance evaluations. Hence, in the first empirical chapter of this dissertation, chapter 4, I present evidence that voters in Colombia and Peru are willing to punish corruption and that the electoral penalties for corruption are often selective.

In particular, in chapter 4, I analyze a prominent hypothesis of the socio-psychological approach to electoral accountability for corruption, namely the tradeoff between corruption and competence. I find that voters are prepared to punish corruption even if politicians are described as competent in providing public works, and that competence in public works provision does not always reduce the electoral penalties for corrupt politicians. Counter to the tradeoff hypothesis, respondents in a Colombian sample apply greater electoral punishment to corrupt candidates who are described as competent politicians than to those who are seen as incompetent ones. The theoretical value of this empirical finding is that it shows there is an additional unexplained variation in the likelihood of corrupt leaders to get away with corruption that is not fully captured by voters' economic preferences for a competent candidate.

To further support the claim of selective penalties, I show in chapter 5 that voting attitudes do not behave in the same way as tolerance of corruption, and that purported indifference toward corruption in settings of widespread corruption does not account for corrupt leaders' electoral survival. Adding to a recent scholarly debate about the risks of corruption persistence in highly corrupt environments, in chapter 5, I examine the puzzle of voting attitudes toward corrupt politicians when corruption is seen as a very common practice in society. I find that, in fact, citizens in Colombia and Peru are not less likely to punish corrupt politicians when they are made aware of the high prevalence of corruption in their countries. In both country samples, respondents are ready to punish a corrupt politician even in highly corrupt environments, and the size of the corruption penalty remains unchanged when moving to a comparable context of limited corruption. This empirical evidence challenges the idea that normalization of corruption impedes electoral accountability for corruption. While previous studies show that voters might be more tolerant of corruption when they are accustomed to it, I show that acceptance of corruption in their daily lives

does not inherently result in electoral support for corrupt politicians.

In chapter 6, I provide further support for the idea that electoral accountability for corruption is resilient and that voters apply selective punishments to corruption. I turn to the analysis of a central proposition of this dissertation, that citizens apply smaller penalties to corrupt politicians when the electoral alternatives are uncertain. This theoretical expectation builds on the previous empirical pieces of evidence, discussed in chapters 4 and 5, that voters in Colombia and Peru, two countries where politics and illegal activities are deeply intertwined, are in fact willing to punish corruption under theoretically adverse situations. In chapter 6, therefore, I complement this insight with the finding that the magnitude of the effect of corruption is conditional upon voters' perceived availability of electoral options. The significance of this finding is that, while robust party competition can influence electoral accountability through two different pathways that are difficult to separate, using experimental techniques I am able to observe one of them. Thereby, I am able to detect the influence of robust party competition on electoral accountability that does not pertain to facilitating voters' attribution of blame for corruption, but relates to parties' signaling to voters the clear electoral choices available for an effective punishment of corruption.

These pieces of evidence altogether suggest that voters are less acquiescent on matters of corruption than the literature on electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries would suggest, and that the existing theoretical frameworks for understanding voter responses to corruption need to incorporate the role of robust party competition. The results support the notion that voters are selective, rather than indifferent, when applying electoral penalties to corrupt politicians, and that a framework of contextualized corruption voting ought to be further explored for a more nuanced understanding of voting attitudes towards corrupt politicians. In this dissertation, I have contributed with the first step toward building such a framework, by taking

advantage of experimental methods to systematically test the central propositions of contextualized corruption voting.

7.2 Possible Extensions

Overall, these results suggest that citizens are not accepting of corruption, and that they apply differential electoral penalties to corruption depending on the political context they live in. Nevertheless, these findings should be taken with great caution. Before over-extrapolating from two experiments in Colombia and Peru, other studies could explore in greater depth the nuances of corruption voting in developing countries.

One interesting avenue for future research would be to incorporate the internal dynamics of a corruption accusation into the analysis of the contextual conditions that undermine electoral accountability for corruption in developing countries. Two prominent components of any corruption scandal involving a candidate for high-level office are (a) the type of political justification a politician uses to defend him or herself against a corruption accusation and (b) the type of candidate selection strategy party leaders would use to uphold or withdraw the candidacy of the tainted politician. These two crucial components of the politics of exposed corruption are out of the scope of the present research, but a future study could investigate in depth these strategies to better understand the role party elites play in the long-term process of democratic accountability.

Citizens could respond differently to exposed corruption when accused politicians engage in this type of justificatory strategy. If a politician dismisses the accusation as plain fabrication or as part of a political complot, would voters apply a larger electoral toll on the political fate of that

allegedly corrupt politician? Or, more importantly, how would such attacks and counter-attacks, in which politicians engage against the authorities in charge of judicial investigations, affect public attitudes such as the confidence in the democratic system or the trust in judicial authorities? In addition, exploring not only how voters respond to corruption accusations but also when party elites choose to reject or overlook accusations against members of their own parties is paramount. While the existing literature on candidate selection would suggest that party elites play a limited role in selecting candidates because of the high personalization of electoral campaigns in Colombia and Peru, it would be interesting to understand the reasons why political parties do not seem to weigh these integrity concerns in their selection decisions.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to conduct new corruption experiments and observe the electoral performance of real political candidates in other developing democracies with higher levels of party system institutionalization. A new set of experiments in countries where the variation of inter-party competition patterns is more pronounced than in Colombia and Peru would particularly allow me to further investigate how well the concept of the clarity of alternatives travels outside these two countries. In line with the literature on subnational democratic regimes, I anticipate that party systems vary widely within countries and that the structure of contextualized corruption voting presented in this dissertation could be found elsewhere. Nevertheless, new studies could add relevant country cases to improve our understanding of how the clarity of alternatives shapes voter responses to corrupt politicians in a wider range of developing democracies. To the extent that uncertainty with party choices is a central concern in comparative research in developing democracies, this line of research is surprisingly underdeveloped and in need of greater scholarly attention.

A final, attractive avenue for future research would be to incorporate into this investigation

an analysis of the strength and independence of prosecutorial and audit offices across Latin American countries. While the present study assumes that monitoring institutions in Latin America are more capable of detecting, investigating, and reporting corruption than they were three or four decades ago after the democratic transitions, new studies about the origins and development of such institutions over time could shed new light on the long-term politics of democratic accountability. A cross-national historical perspective on the development of prosecutorial institutions would allow me to further explore the relationship between horizontal and vertical accountability in developing democracies. Studying the political development of prosecutorial and audit institutions could help us better understand how these institutions interact with civil society, and how they might embolden the public to take action against corruption. At the same time, this avenue of research could also shed light on how mass mobilization and active rejection of corruption could in turn empower these institutions.

7.3 The Larger Meaning of Electoral Accountability for Corruption

The present study has two implications for scholars interested in democratic accountability, political representation, and corruption in developing countries.

These findings suggest first that citizens are not cynical or passive about efforts to curb corruption. By isolating the electoral cost of corruption, I have uncovered an important feature of the micro-foundations of electoral accountability for corruption in developing democracies. Primarily, that informed voters are willing to take the corrupt or honest records of candidates into account when making electoral decisions. Scholars studying corruption need to update the

stereotype of Latin American voters turning a blind eye to dishonest officials. Citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with the issue of corruption and do not exonerate corrupt politicians even when those officials have a reputation of being public goods providers or when corruption is perceived to be the norm rather than the exception. Citizens' increasing willingness to act upon their discontent with corrupt officials could have long lasting consequences for the quality of democracy.

Decreased tolerance thresholds mean that electoral accountability over time could be an effective tool to curb corruption. Changing public attitudes toward corruption could signal to future government elites that justifying corrupt acts with economic efficiency or concealing wrongdoings by pointing at the corruptness of the opposition are no longer effective strategies to escape the wrath of the public. Decreased tolerance thresholds also imply that public opinion could put pressure on the government and their legislative representatives to introduce new and more extensive political reforms against corruption.

The second implication of this work is that the way political parties structure electoral competition has important consequences for combating the entrenchment of corruption in developing countries. By showing that the rate of corruption punishment increases with the clarity of party options, I have gained a better understanding of the hindrances voters sometimes face in enforcing electoral penalties. Party elites, therefore, play an essential role in creating the opportunities that facilitate or impede citizens' efforts to combat corruption. Some particular strategies party leaders use, such as creating new political parties or changing party labels, can indeed protect corrupt politicians from electoral losses and contribute to the entrenchment of corruption in the long run.

Given that extreme uncertainty with the menu of choices characterizes many developing democracies, the implications of the finding that clarity of alternatives matters for accountability are far-reaching. While the extant literature suggests that incentives to overlook corruption often come from voters' strong partisan attachments, in Colombia and Peru we observe that the failures of electoral accountability also originate in the opposing extreme, when partisan allegiances are fragile and party systems in flux.

Appendix A Supplementary Materials for Chapter 3

A.1 Survey Instrument – Peru (Spanish)

N9. GENERO.
(1) Masculino (2) Femenino

N10. EDAD. ¿Cuál es su edad exacta?
_____

N11. ANIONAC. Año de nacimiento
_____

ESA
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus altos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido acusado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional de otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de 1 millón de soles en coimas durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó más obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESB
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus bajos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido acusado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional de otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de 1 millón de soles en coimas durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó más obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESC
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus altos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido elogiado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional por otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta y transparente durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó más obras en beneficio de

la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESD
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus bajos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido elogiado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional por otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta y transparente durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó más obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESE
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus altos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido acusado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional de otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de 1 millón de soles en coimas durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESF
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus bajos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido acusado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional de otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de 1 millón de soles en coimas durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESG
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus altos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido elogiado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional por otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta y transparente durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ESH
Imagine que Juan es un candidato al congreso por una región conocida por sus bajos niveles de corrupción. Juan ha sido elogiado por una comisión anticorrupción internacional por otorgar múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta y transparente durante su gestión anterior como alcalde. También es conocido porque construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población que la mayoría de alcaldes en el país. Juan asegura que si es electo al congreso trabajará para sacar adelante obras y leyes importantes para mejorar la calidad de vida de su región.

ES1. Imagine que Sandra/o **(USAR SEXO DEL ENTREVISTADO)** es una persona como usted viviendo en la región descrita. En una escala del 1 al 7, donde 7 es muy probable y 1 es muy improbable **(MOSTRAR TARJETA ES1)**, ¿qué tan probable es que Sandra/o vote por Juan?

Muy probable						**Muy improbable**	**NP**
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	99

A.2 Survey Instrument – Colombia (Spanish)

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 1
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha acusado de haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de sobornos durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 2
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha acusado de haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de sobornos durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 3
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha elogiado por haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 4
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha elogiado por haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 5
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Pedro es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 6
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Pedro es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 7

Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha acusado de haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de sobornos durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 8
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha acusado de haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas a cambio de sobornos durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 9
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha elogiado por haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 10
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Una comisión anticorrupción internacional lo ha elogiado por haber otorgado múltiples contratos públicos a empresas contratistas de manera honesta durante su gestión como gobernador. Pedro también es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 11
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Pedro es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó más obras en beneficio de la población.

CUESTIONARIO CORRUPCION 12
Imagine que las elecciones son el próximo domingo y que Pedro es un candidato al congreso. Pedro es conocido por ser uno de los gobernadores de Colombia que construyó menos obras en beneficio de la población.

[ENTRÉGUELE AL ENCUESTADO LA TARJETA “J”]
Ahora, ¿Qué tan probable es que una persona como usted, que vive en un barrio como el suyo…
[Anotar 1-7, (888888) No sabe, (988888) No responde, (999999) Inaplicable]

COLEXCO1A. Apruebe la gestión de Pedro?
COLEXCO1B. Salga a votar si las elecciones fueran el próximo domingo?
COLEXCO1C. Vote por Pedro si las elecciones fueran el próximo domingo?

[Recoger Tarjeta “J”]

COLEXCO1D. Y pensando en la situación que le mencioné anteriormente, ¿qué tan corrupta fue la gestión de Pedro como gobernador? Usted diría que fue… [Leer alternativas]
(1) Muy corrupta
(2) Algo corrupta
(3) Poco corrupta
(4) Nada corrupta
(888888) No sabe [NO LEER]
(988888) No responde [NO LEER]
(999999) Inaplicable [NO LEER]

A.3 Sample Representativeness

Table 7.1 Samples Representativeness

	2015 Peruvian Sample	2017 Peruvian Census	2016 Colombian Sample	2018 Colombian Census
Male	49.6%	49.2%	50.29%	48.6%
Female	50.4%	50.8%	49.71%	51.4%
Age 18-25	24.9%	23.58%	19.96%	22.5% (Age 0- 14)
Age 26-40	38.8%	35.34%	37.17%	68.3% (Age 15-64)
Age 41-60	28.6%	27.92%	32.18%	--
Age 61 +	7.8%	13.16%	10.68%	9.2% (Age 65 +)

Sources: INEI for census data from Peru, and DANE for census data from Colombia.

A.4 Information Seeking Results

I was able to introduce an item for information seeking in the survey that I conducted in Peru to test whether corruption would diminish respondents' interest in seeking out political information. I asked how much information would someone like you be willing to seek about the candidates in next election. I found that the corruption treatment did not significantly move the intentions of respondents to seek political information. On 1-7 scale, where 1 is "seek less information than usual" and 7 "seek more information than usual", those in the honest condition responded on average 4.84 and those in the corruption condition responded on average 4.68, and the difference in means is not statistically significant.

Table 7.2 Information Seeking Results

	Information Seeking	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Intervals
Honest Record Condition	4.84	0.07	1.76	[4.71 - 4.98]
Corruption Record Condition	4.68	0.08	0.98	[4.52 - 4.83]
Difference-in-means	0.17	0.05	1.88	[-.04 - 0.37]

Appendix B Supplementary Materials for Chapter 4

B.1 Summary Statistics for Sample in Peru

Table 7.3 Summary Statistics for Sample in Peru

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Education Level	2.71	1.40	0	7
Age (18-70)	37.69	14.06	18	70
Female (0-1)	0.50	0.50	0	1
Socioeconomic Level (1-5)	3.22	1.03	1	5

B.2 Summary Statistics for Sample in Colombia

Table 7.4 Summary Statistics for Sample in Colombia

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Education Years	9.84	4.28	0	18
Age (18-88)	39.52	14.99	18	88
Female (0-1)	0.49	0.50	0	1
Economic Situation (1-3)	2.51	0.65	1	3

B.3 Average Corruption Effects with Survey Weights

While there are no standard operating procedures for weighting survey experiments, I report in Table 7.5 the results of the average treatment effect (ATE) analysis using survey weights. Comparing this coefficient of interest analysis that uses survey weights to the one reported in the text that does not use survey weights, I find that there is no substantive difference between the sample and population average treatment effects. Therefore, survey weights may be unnecessary in these case studies to correct differences between sample and population.

Table 7.5 Average Corruption Effects with Survey Weights

	Corrupt	Honest	ATE	95% Conf. Interval
Peru	30.10	49.74	-19.64***	[15.92 - 23.35]
Stand. Error	(1.32)	(1.41)		
Colombia	35.23	54.46	-19.22***	[15.51 - 22.94]
Stand. Error	(1.21)	(1.64)		

ATE = average treatment effect. *p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

B.4 Manipulation Check

As a manipulation check for the main corruption treatment in the experiment, I asked, "how corrupt do you think [Pedro's] administration was?" in the Colombian sample. This question allowed me to test whether respondents who were randomly assigned to the corruption condition did in fact find Pedro more corrupt than those assigned to the honest condition. I find that the corruption treatment was effective in moving respondents' perceptions of the corrupt record of the vignette candidate. The respondents did not discard the corruption information as unreliable information. On a 1-4 scale, where 1 is "no corrupt" and 4 is "very corrupt", those in the honest condition rated Pedro's administration as 2.54 and those in the corruption condition rated it 3.23. The difference in means is statistically significant.

Table 7.6 Manipulation Check

	Corruption Perception	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Intervals
Honest Record Condition	2.54	0.05	1.03	[2.45 - 2.63]
Corruption Record Condition	3.23	0.04	0.91	[3.15 - 3.31]
Difference-in-means	0.69***	0.06	1.03	[0.81 - 0.57]

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

B.5 Tradeoff Effect in Peru

Table 7.7 Corruption Effects by Candidate Competence in Peru

	Honest	Corrupt	Difference	95% Conf. Intervals
Competence	53.28	36.69	-16.59***	[11.52 - 21.66]
Incompetence	46.23	23.33	-22.89***	[18.31 - 27.47]
Diff-in-Diff			6.30*	

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

B.6 Tradeoff Effect in Colombia

Table 7.8 Corruption Effects by Candidate Competence in Colombia

	Honest	Corrupt	Difference	95% Conf. Intervals
Competence	67.03	42.70	-24.33***	[19.14 - 29.52]
Incompetence	42.13	26.81	-15.31***	[10.86 - 19.77]
Diff-in-Diff			-9.01**	

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Appendix C Supplementary Materials for Chapter 5

C.1 Intra-National Variation in Colombia

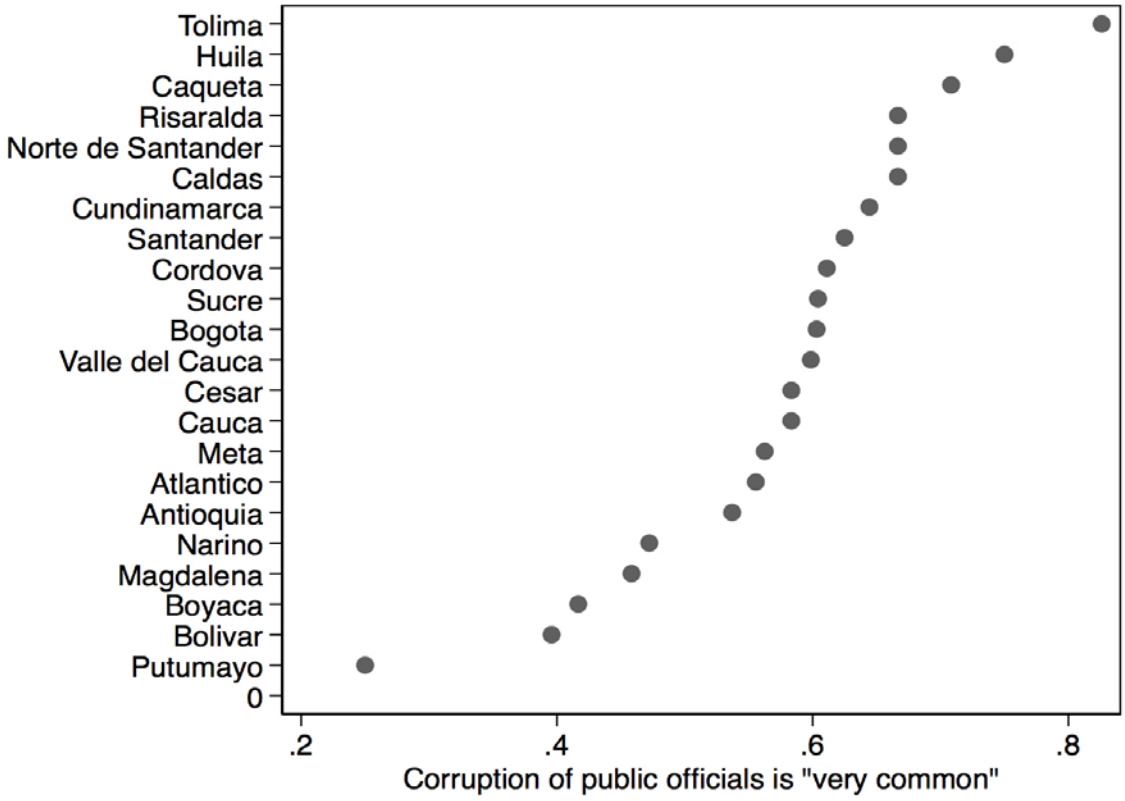


Figure 7.1 Intra-National Variation of Perceptions of Corruption in Public Office in Colombia

C.2 Intra-National Variation in Peru

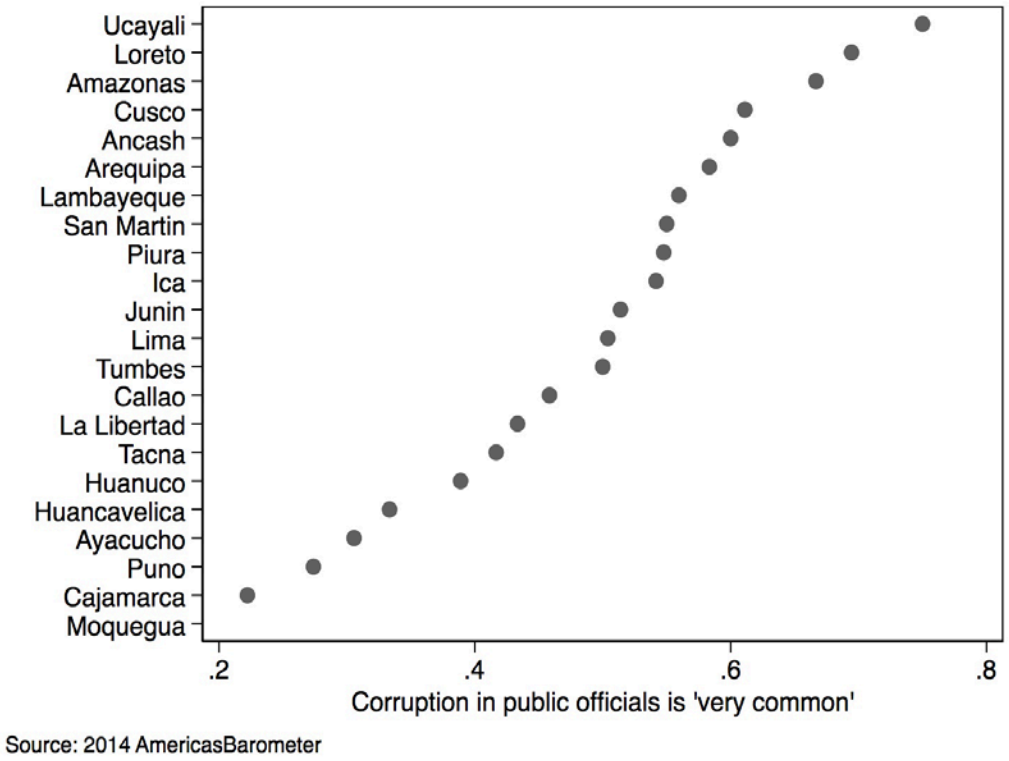


Figure 7.2 Intra-National Variation of Perceptions of Corruption in Public Office in Peru

C.3 The Effect of Widespread Corruption in Peru

Table 7.9 Corruption Effects by Low and High Levels of Prevalent Corruption in Peru

	Honest	Corrupt	Difference	95% Conf. Intervals
Low Prevalence	52.02	31.67	-20.36***	[15.55 - 25.16]
High Prevalence	47.50	28.51	-18.99***	[14.01 - 23.97]
Diff-in-Diff			1.37	

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

C.4 The Effect of Widespread Corruption in Colombia

Table 7.10 Corruption Effects by Widespread Corruption and Placebo Conditions in Colombia

	Honest	Corrupt	Difference	95% Conf. Intervals
Placebo	53.42	33.85	-19.57***	[14.54 - 24.59]
Widespread	55.53	36.59	-18.94***	[13.62 - 24.26]
Diff-in-Diff			0.62	

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Appendix D Supplementary Material for Chapter 6

D.1 A Movement Departing from Weak Clarity of Alternatives

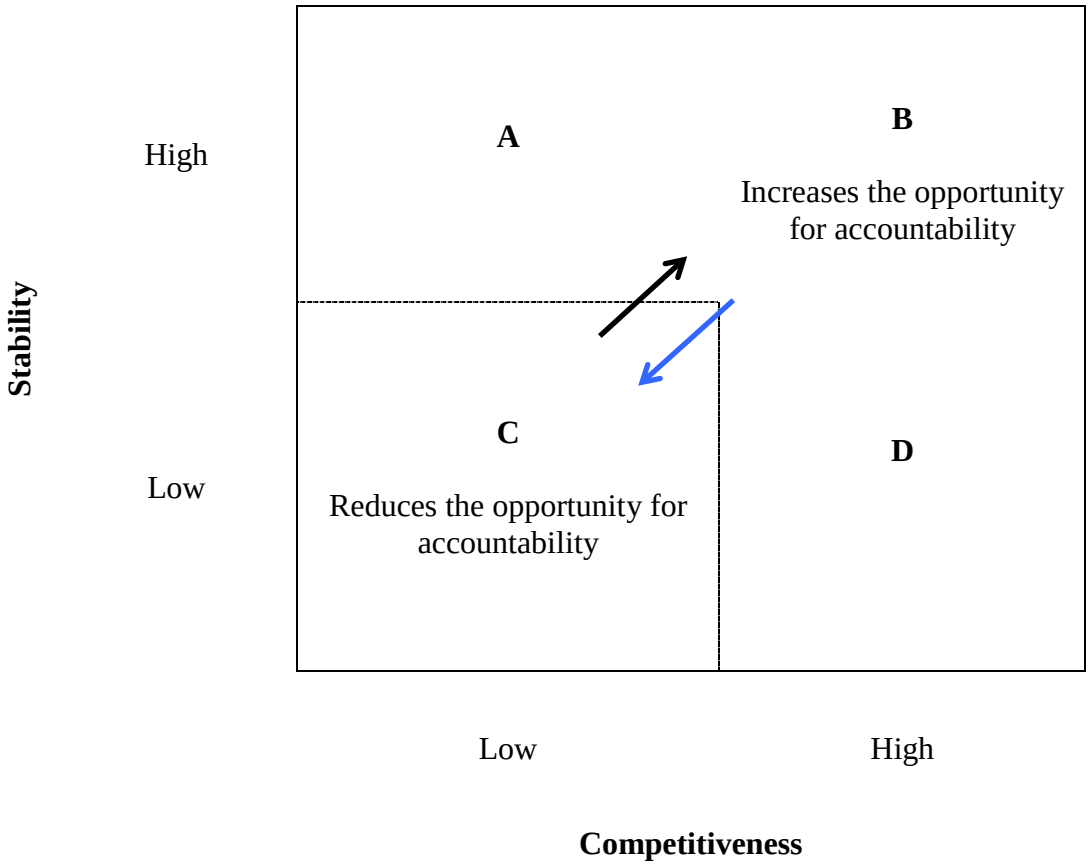


Figure 7.3 Movement Departing from Weak Clarity of Alternatives

The graph in Figure 7.3 depicts the possible movements departing from (and towards) cell C. A movement away from C and towards any cell of strong clarity of alternatives (A, B, or D)

increases the opportunity for accountability. Conversely, a movement in the opposite direction (blue arrow), towards cell C, decreases the opportunity for accountability for corruption.

D.2 Indicator Description and Aggregation

For Peru, the indicators I use for building the dimension of *party system stability* at the subnational level are: volatility in 2011 legislative election (relative to 2006), volatility in 2006 legislative election (relative to 2001), volatility in 2011 presidential election (relative to 2006), volatility in 2006 presidential election (relative to 2001). I average these four indicators of volatility at the regional level (25 regions). The indicators I use for building *electoral competitiveness* are: the margin of victory in 2011 legislative election, margin of victory in in 2006 legislative election, margin of victory in 2011 presidential election, margin of victory in 2006 presidential election. These four indicators of margin of victory are also averaged at the regional level. Then, I use two aggregated measures in the calculation of the binary variable of clarity of alternatives.

For Colombia, I follow an identical procedure, except that election years are of course different. First, I build the dimension of *party system stability* at the subnational level using: volatility in 2010 legislative election (relative to 2006), volatility in 2006 legislative election (relative to 2001), volatility in 2010 presidential election (relative to 2006), volatility in 2006 presidential election (relative to 2006). These four indicators of volatility are averaged at the regional level. Then, to create the *electoral competitiveness* variable I use: the margin of victory in 2010 legislative election, margin of victory in 2006 legislative election, margin of victory in 2010 presidential election, margin of victory in 2006 presidential election. Again, these four indicators of margin of victory are averaged at the subnational level (departments in the Colombian case). Finally, I use these two aggregated measures in the creation of the binary variable of clarity alternatives.

I display the values of these two dimensions in Figure 7.4. In Colombia, I have four pairs

of indicators for 33 departments, a total of 132 observations. In Peru, I have four pairs for 25 regions, a total of 75 observations. The observations in Figure 7.4 are, therefore, raw values of the two indicators, stability and competitiveness, for each country.

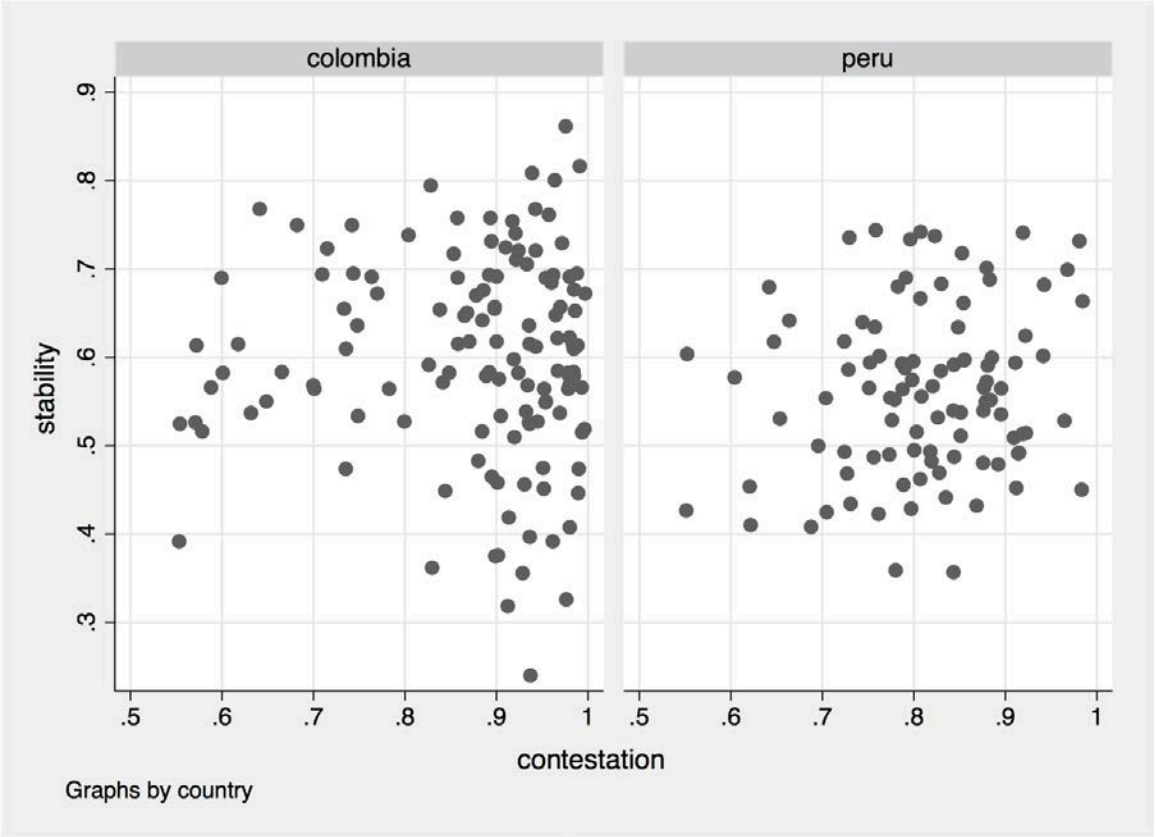


Figure 7.4 Raw Values of Stability and Competitiveness

D.3 Partisanship and Electoral Accountability

The analysis consists of an assessment of the partisan shields that corrupt politicians have in contexts of multiparty systems. Given the context of party system de-institutionalization in Colombia and Peru, I expected that partisan ties would be too weak to protect corrupt candidates from electoral penalties. Certainly, I find that voters who identify with political parties tend to be as lenient with corruption accusations as voters who do not identify with any political party. Models 13 and 16 show that our corruption treatment significantly decreases support for the candidate but partisan voters are not significantly more likely than nonpartisan voters to punish corrupt candidates. The difference in the effect of corruption between voters who are partisans and voters who are nonpartisans is virtually nonexistent. Identifying with a political party does not motivate voters to punish corruption more leniently. In other words, partisanship does not reduce accountability.

Table 7.11 Corruption Effects on Electoral Support by Partisanship

DV: Electoral Support	Peru		Colombia	
	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16
Corruption	-19.71***	-18.34***	- 19.24***	- 18.42***
	(1.86)	(2.06)	(1.57)	(1.68)
Partisan	2.39	4.70	0.77	2.72
	(1.66)	(2.37)	(2.48)	(3.19)
Corruption * Partisan		-4.48		-3.68
		(3.42)		(4.31)
Constant	49.04***	48.36***	54.29***	53.88***
	(1.47)	(1.52)	(1.56)	(1.48)
Observations	1271	1271	1024	1024

Standard errors in parentheses
*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

The finding that partisanship does not reduce the impact of corruption on electoral support has important implications for our understanding of how electoral accountability in fluid party systems works. Partisan identity constitutes an important component of the socio-psychological approach to the failures of electoral accountability for corruption. It has been shown that partisanship reduces the weight of non-confirmatory information on voters' decision-making (Taber & Lodge, 2006). When information on corruption becomes available, citizens with strong partisan attachments to those individuals or parties tainted with corruption do not consider it as an important problem and do not punish it electorally (Anduiza et al., 2013). In fluid party systems, however, we also know that voters' ability to distinguish between political parties and take cues from party labels is often reduced (Brader, Tucker, & Duell, 2013; Lupu, 2013). While I cannot evaluate the strength of specific party cues with these data, the evidence suggests that overall voter attachments to political parties cannot explain the variation in electoral penalties for corruption.[86]

[86] In the case of Colombia, 22% of respondents reported a partisan affinity with more than 11 political parties voluntarily reported, and in the case of Peru, 30% of respondents reported a partisan affinity with more than 15 political parties also voluntarily reported.

D.4 Additional Models for Clarity of Alternatives

Alternative model specifications provide further support for hypothesis 6.1, which posits that penalties for corruption are smaller under conditions of weak clarity of alternatives. Table 7.12 presents three additional model specifications for Colombia. Models 17 and 19 include additional observations in the Colombian survey from a group that was assigned to a pure control condition. In all models, the interaction term between the clarity of alternatives and corruption treatment is, again, statistically significant, confirming the previous finding that corruption effects are moderated by weak clarity of alternatives.

Table 7.12 Corruption Effects by Clarity of Alternatives, Additional Models

DV: Electoral Support		Colombia	
	Model 17	Model 18	Model 19
Corruption	-17.41***	-17.45***	-17.41***
	(1.29)	(1.79)	(1.34)
Weak Clarity	-3.99	-4.65	-3.99
	(3.64)	(2.91)	(3.73)
Corruption * Weak Clarity	**9.56****	**9.66****	**9.56****
	(4.50)	**(4.72)**	**(4.40)**
Constant	51.84***	52.22***	51.84***
	(0.98)	(1.16)	(1.21)
Observations	1540	1540	1540
Regions	22	22	22
Districts	47	47	47

Model 4 is a complex survey regression. Model 5 is a multilevel model with random effects at electoral district level. And Model 6 is a regression with clustered standard errors at the district level. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

D.5 Marginal Effects

Table 7.13 Predicted Values of Electoral Support in Colombia, by Clarity of Alternatives

	Margin	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Corruption						
Corruption=0	54.48	1.59	34.16	0.000	51.29	57.67
Corruption=1	35.26	1.17	30.09	0.000	32.91	37.61
Weak Clarity						
Weak Clarity =0	44.67	1.04	43.06	0.000	42.60	46.75
Weak Clarity =1	45.11	3.79	11.90	0.000	37.53	52.70
Corruption*Weak Clarity						
Corruption= 0; Weak Clarity=0	55.20	1.53	36.18	0.000	52.15	58.26
Corruption= 0; Weak Clarity=1	50.37	5.50	9.16	0.000	39.35	61.38
Corruption= 1; Weak Clarity=0	34.43	1.20	28.73	0.000	32.03	36.83
Corruption= 1; Weak Clarity=1	40.00	3.63	11.03	0.000	32.74	47.26

Notes: Using Model 4 from Table 6.2, a complex survey regression, taking into account the clustering and sampling weights of the survey.

Table 7.14 Predicted Values of Electoral Support in Peru, by Clarity of Alternatives

	Margin	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Corruption						
Corruption=0	49.75	1.41	35.21	0.000	46.93	52.57
Corruption=1	30.12	1.31	22.94	0.000	27.50	32.73
Weak Clarity						
Weak Clarity =0	39.92	1.08	36.80	0.000	37.75	42.08
Weak Clarity =1	39.83	2.21	17.99	0.000	35.41	44.24
Corruption*Weak Clarity						
Corruption= 0; Weak Clarity=0	50.59	1.64	30.81	0.000	47.31	53.86
Corruption= 0; Weak Clarity=1	47.06	2.53	18.57	0.000	42.00	52.11
Corruption= 1; Weak Clarity=0	29.33	1.50	19.52	0.000	26.33	32.32
Corruption= 1; Weak Clarity=1	32.65	2.57	12.73	0.000	27.54	37.77

Notes: Using Model 1 from Table 6.1, a complex survey regression, taking into account the clustering and sampling weights of the survey.

D.6 Party System Instability

Alternative analyses of party system stability provide further support to the finding that corruption effects do not decrease substantively with electoral volatility. As shown this chapter, the trend seems to follow a somewhat decreasing movement, but party system stability does not significantly reduce electoral accountability. Table 7.15 displays the predicted effect of corruption across a disaggregated indicator of party system stability at the electoral district level, measuring the electoral volatility in presidential and legislative elections separately. In most cases, the predicted effect of the corruption treatment on electoral support follows a somewhat decreasing trend, but some other cases, the trend are almost flat. Again, while corruption effects are statistically significant, changes in the rate of corruption costs are not significant.

Table 7.15 Predicted Corruption Effects by Levels of Party System Stability

Country	Elections	Electoral Volatility	Corruption Effect	Stand. Err.	P value
Peru	Presidential	At 25%	-20.43	4.6	0.000
	(2011-2016)	At 50%	-19.54	1.9	0.000
		At 75%	-18.64	5.6	0.000
Peru	Legislative	At 25%	-11.78	7.9	0.000
	(2011-2016)	At 50%	-20.32	1.9	0.000
		At 75%	-28.86	8.7	0.000
Colombia	Presidential	At 25%	-25.26	3.5	0.000
	(2010-2014)	At 50%	-18.15	1.6	0.000
		At 75%	-11.03	4.7	0.000
Colombia	Legislative	At 10%	-17.70	4.2	0.000
	(2010-2014)	At 30%	-18.39	1.6	0.000
		At 60%	-19.09	4.8	0.000

D.7 Electoral Competitiveness

Additional analysis of electoral competition with disaggregated indicators further support for idea that corruption effects do not decrease substantively with electoral competitiveness. Table 7.16 shows the effect of corruption across a disaggregated indicator of electoral competitiveness, measuring the margin of victory in presidential and legislative elections separately. In all indicators of the closeness of elections in both countries, the predicted effect of the corruption treatment follows a somewhat decreasing trend, but changes in the rate of corruption costs are not significant.

Table 7.16 Predicted Corruption Effects by Levels of Electoral Competitiveness

Country	Elections	Margin of Victory	Corruption Effect	Stand. Err.	P value
Peru	Presidential (2011 & 2016)	At 5%	-21.8	2.6	0.000
		At 10%	-20.5	1.9	0.000
		At 15%	-19.2	2.0	0.000
		At 20%	-17.9	2.7	0.000
Peru	Legislative (2011 & 2016)	At 5%	-22.0	3.1	0.000
		At 10%	-20.3	2.0	0.000
		At 15%	-18.6	2.1	0.000
		At 20%	-16.8	3.4	0.000
Colombia	Presidential (2010 & 2014)	At 5%	-21.16	2.2	0.000
		At 10%	-19.45	1.6	0.000
		At 15%	-17.74	1.9	0.000
		At 20%	-16.03	2.8	0.000
Colombia	Legislative (2010 & 2014)	At 5%	-18.97	1.9	0.000
		At 10%	-18.17	1.8	0.000
		At 15%	-17.36	3.2	0.000
		At 20%	-16.56	5.1	0.000

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