Online Appendix for "Corruption, Salience, and Political Selection"

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A-1   Salience Model

In this section, I go over the most important aspect of the adaptation of the model by Bordalo et al. (2012, 2013) to the context of political selection, as first presented by Zambrini (2016).

Let's assume a citizen has to choose between N politicians who are indistinguishable except for two characteristics: competence c_k and d_k, where $c_k, d_k \in \mathbb{R}_+$ and $k \in \{1, ..., N\}$. Without salience distortions, a citizen i values politician k with a linear utility function

$$u_i(c_k, d_k) = \theta_{i1} c_k - \theta_{i2} d_k \tag{A-1}$$

where $\theta_{i1}, \theta_{i2} > 0$ and $\theta_{i1} + \theta_{i2} = 1 \ \forall i$.

The assumption behind this utility function is that the citizen's utility is increasing in the politician's competence and decreasing in their dishonesty. θ_{i1} and θ_{i2} are instead the weights that individual i assigns to competence and dishonesty, respectively. As these weights vary by individual it is possible to find citizens who care, and therefore base their choice, only on competence while others only on dishonesty.

A salient thinker, as described in Bordalo et al. (2012, 2013), departs from A-1 by modifying the relative weights attached to the attributes. While still assigning more importance to competence or dishonesty in their decision process (that is, θ_{i1} and θ_{i2} are fixed), the salient thinker might overweight the characteristic that they perceive as most salient. Intuitively, the salient characteristic is the one that stands out relative to the other one.

Let's denote by $(\bar{c}, \bar{d})$ the reference politician consisting of average characteristics $\bar{c} \equiv \sum_{k=1}^{N} \frac{c_k}{N}$ and $\bar{d} \equiv \sum_{k=1}^{N} \frac{d_k}{N}$. The salience of competence for politician k is then given by $\sigma(c_k, \bar{c})$, while the salience of dishonesty for politician k is given by $\sigma(d_k, \bar{d})$. To define the salience function $\sigma(\cdot, \cdot)$, denote by a_k the level of a characteristic (competence or dishonesty) for politician k and by $\bar{a}$ the characteristic's average level. We then have the following definition.

Definition 1. The salience function $\sigma(\cdot, \cdot)$ is symmetric and continuous and satisfies the following conditions:

1. *Ordering.* Let $\mu = \text{sgn}(a_k - \bar{a})$. Then for any $\varepsilon, \varepsilon' \geq 0$ with $\varepsilon + \varepsilon' > 0$, we have

$$\sigma(a_k + \mu\varepsilon, \bar{a} - \mu\varepsilon') > \sigma(a_k, \bar{a}) \tag{A-2}$$

2. *Diminishing sensitivity.* For any $a_k, \bar{a} \geq 0$ and all $\varepsilon > 0$, we have

$$\sigma(a_k + \varepsilon, \bar{a} + \varepsilon) < \sigma(a_k, \bar{a}) \tag{A-3}$$

We say that competence is salient for politician k when $\sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) > \sigma(d_k, \bar{d})$, dishonesty is salient for politician k when $\sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) < \sigma(d_k, \bar{d})$, and dishonesty and competence are equally salient when $\sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) = \sigma(d_k, \bar{d})$.

Intuitively, ordering implies that a characteristic is salient when it is very different from its average level among the other politicians; diminishing sensitivity implies that the salience of a characteristic decreases as the value of that same characteristic uniformly increases for all politicians.

Ordering and diminishing sensitivity interact in determining salience. Suppose that the dishonesty d_k of the most dishonest politician goes up. By ordering, d_k becomes more salient. At the same time, the increase in d_k increases the average dishonesty level $\bar{d}$. By diminishing sensitivity, this reduces the salience of d_k. When, as in this case, ordering and diminishing sensitivity point in different directions, the trade-off between them is pinned down by the specific salience function adopted. To pin down this trade-off, I follow Bordalo et al. (2013) and assume that the salience function is homogeneous of degree zero.

Assumption 1. The salience function satisfies ordering and homogeneity of degree zero, which is defined as $\sigma(\alpha \cdot a_k, \alpha \cdot \bar{a}) = \sigma(a_k, \cdot \bar{a})$ for all $\alpha > 0$.

In what follows, I will use the same salience function used in Bordalo et al. (2012, 2013) that satisfies homogeneity of degree zero and is

$$\sigma(a_k, \bar{a}) = \frac{\mid a_k - \bar{a} \mid}{a_k + \bar{a}} \tag{A-4}$$

for $a_k, \bar{a} \neq 0$, and $\sigma(0, 0) = 0$.

Bordalo et al. (2013) then show the following proposition:

Proposition 1. Let (c_k, d_k) be a politician that neither dominates nor is dominated by the reference politician $(\bar{c}, \bar{d})$, that is $(c_k - \bar{c})(d_k - \bar{d}) > 0$. The following two statements are equivalent:

1. The higher competence or lower dishonesty of k relative to $(\bar{c}, \bar{d})$ is salient iff $\frac{c_k}{d_k} > \frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{d}}$.

2. Salience is homogeneous of degree zero.

The last part of the model considers how salience distorts the valuation of a politician. Given a salience function σ, a voter ranks a politician's characteristics and distorts their utility weights as follows.

Definition 2. The salient thinker's valuation of politician k enhances the relative utility weight attached to the salient attribute (keeping constant the sum of weights attached to competence and dishonesty). Formally:

$$u_k^s = \begin{cases} \frac{\theta_1}{\theta_1 + \delta\theta_2}c_k - \frac{\delta\theta_2}{\theta_1 + \delta\theta_2}d_k, & \text{if } \sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) > \sigma(d_k, \bar{d}) \\ \theta_1 c_k - \theta_2 d_k, & \text{if } \sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) = \sigma(d_k, \bar{d}) \\ \frac{\delta\theta_1}{\delta\theta_1 + \theta_2}c_k - \frac{\theta_2}{\delta\theta_1 + \theta_2}d_k, & \text{if } \sigma(c_k, \bar{c}) < \sigma(d_k, \bar{d}) \end{cases} \tag{A-5}$$

where $\delta \in (0, 1]$ decreases in the severity of salient thinking.

In the case where competence is the salient characteristic, its relative weight will increase from θ_1 to $\frac{\theta_1}{\theta_1 + \delta\theta_2} > \theta_1$ and the relative weight of dishonesty will decrease from θ_2 to $\frac{\delta\theta_2}{\theta_1 + \delta\theta_2} < \theta_2$, as compared to the rational citizen's valuation. Conversely, in the case where dishonesty is the salient characteristic, its relative weight will increase from θ_2 to $\frac{\theta_2}{\delta\theta_1 + \theta_2} > \theta_2$ and the relative weight of competence will decrease from θ_1 to $\frac{\delta\theta_1}{\delta\theta_1 + \theta_2} < \theta_1$, as compared to the rational citizen's valuation. As $\delta \to 1$, the salient thinker converges to the rational thinker. As $\delta \to 0$, the salient thinker considers only the most salient attribute and neglects all others.

A-1.1 Two Politicians Case

To see how the model works in the setting presented in the paper, suppose a voter is evaluating two politicians: Candidate A (c_A, d_A) and Candidate B (c_B, d_B). Their characteristics are fully observable and, as discussed in the paper, Candidate A is the most competent but also the most corrupt. Therefore, competence and dishonesty satisfy $c_A > c_B$ and $d_A > d_B$. The reference politician has competence $\bar{c} = (c_A + c_B)/2$ and dishonesty $\bar{d} = (d_A + d_B)/2$. According to proposition 1, Candidate A's high competence is salient if and only if $c_A/d_A > \bar{c}/\bar{d}$, which can be written as

$$\frac{c_A}{d_A} > \frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{d}} > \frac{c_B}{d_B} \tag{A-6}$$

Thus, c_A is salient for Candidate A when they have a higher competence/dishonesty ration than Candidate B. Proposition 1 similarly implies that, when condition A-6 holds, the lower competence c_B is salient for Candidate B. In sum, when the competence/dishonesty ratio is higher for Candidate A, competence is salient for both politicians. When the competence/dishonesty ratio is higher for Candidate B, dishonesty is salient for both politicians.

Let's now consider how salience affects choice. For simplicity, let's assume $\theta_1 = \theta_2 = 1/2$. When dishonesty is salient, namely when $c_A/d_A < c_B/d_B$, expression A-5 implies that Candidate B is chosen over Candidate A provided

$$\delta \cdot (c_B - c_A) - (d_B - d_A) > 0, \tag{A-7}$$

which is easier to satisfy than its rational counterpart, with $\delta = 1$. Intuitively, when dishonesty is salient, the salient thinker undervalues both politicians but undervalues Candidate A more because dishonesty is the dimension along which the most competent politician does worse.

Analogously, when $c_A/d_A > c_B/d_B$, competence is the salient characteristic and expression A-5 implies that Candidate B is chosen over Candidate A provided

$$(c_B - c_A) - \delta \cdot (d_B - d_A) > 0, \tag{A-8}$$

which is harder to satisfy than its rational counterpart, with $\delta = 1$. Intuitively, when competence is salient, the salient thinker overvalues both politicians, but overvalues Candidate A more because competence is the dimension along which the most competent politician does better.

A-2   Additional Tables

TABLE A-1: SUMMARY STATISTICS

	US Adult Population (1)	Sample (2)
Male	0.48	0.49
18-29 years old	0.23	0.25
30-39 years old	0.20	0.19
40-49 years old	0.19	0.19
50-59 years old	0.20	0.20
60-69 years old	0.18	0.17
$0-$19,999	0.13	0.15
$20,000-$39,999	0.15	0.19
$40,000-$69,999	0.21	0.22
$70,000-$109,999	0.20	0.19
$110,000+	0.31	0.25
White	0.62	0.81
Hispanic	0.17	0.05
Black	0.12	0.06
Asian	0.07	0.04
Northeast	0.17	0.20
Midwest	0.21	0.24
South	0.38	0.36
West	0.24	0.19
Democrat	0.33	0.36
Republican	0.31	0.33
Independent	0.36	0.31
4-year college or more	0.33	0.40
High school or less	0.37	0.20
Employed	0.64	0.58
Self-employed	0.07	0.07
Unemployed	0.02	0.05
Married	0.53	0.51
Sample size		3,002

Notes: The table shows characteristics of the adult US population aged 18 to 69 (column 1) and the characteristics of the respondents in my sample (column 2). Data come from the 2019 Current Population Survey (Flood et al., 2020); data on political affiliation is from the 2019 Political Survey (Pew Research Center, 2019).

TABLE A-2: SALIENCE EXPERIMENT

	Vote Most Corrupt Candidate		
	No party affiliation (1)	Democratic candidate (2)	Republican candidate (3)

Panel A: Descriptive Statistics (low corruption setting)

Mean	0.34	0.42	0.49
Democrat meam	0.25	0.80	0.21
Republican mean	0.39	0.10	0.86
Observations	236	231	234

Panel B: Effect of making competence salient

High Corruption	0.22***	0.14***	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High Corruption × Democrat	0.31***	0.08	-0.10*
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
High Corruption × Republican	0.17**	0.10	0.07
	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Observations	471	461	453
R^2	0.085	0.365	0.414

Notes: The dependent variable in all columns is an indicator variable equal to 1 when respondent chooses Candidate A in the vignette experiment. All regressions include controls for gender, age group, race, income group, employment status, education, and macro-region fixed effects. Coefficients are not reported due to space constraints. Panel A reports the mean of the dependent variables for respondents who were assigned to the low-corruption setting ("Mean"), and separately for Democrats ("Democrat mean") and Republicans ("Republican mean"). Panel B shows the coefficients from two different specifications, whose only difference is given by the interaction of the treatment effects. The first row shows the treatment effects of being assigned to the high-corruption setting ("High Corruption") relative to the omitted category (low-corruption setting). The following two rows show the treatment effects of being assigned to the high-corruption setting interacted with the respondent's political affiliation (High Corruption × Democrat" and "High Corruption × Republican"). Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A-3: Salience Experiment - Party Affiliation

| | Vote Most Corrupt Candidate | | |
	Overall (1)	Low corruption (2)	High corruption (3)
Panel A: Descriptive Statistics (no party affiliation)			
Mean	0.45	0.34	0.55
Democrat mean	0.40	0.25	0.54
Republican mean	0.48	0.39	0.56
Independent mean	0.47	0.39	0.57
Observations	471	236	235
Panel B: Effect of most corrupt candidate being Democrat			
Democratic candidate	0.04	0.07	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Dem. candidate × Democrat	0.43***	0.54***	0.33***
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Dem. candidate × Republican	-0.30***	-0.26***	-0.30***
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Dem. candidate × Independent	-0.04	-0.09	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Observations	932	467	465
R^2	0.094	0.113	0.113
Panel C: Effect of most corrupt candidate being Republican			
Republican candidate	0.06*	0.16***	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Rep. candidate × Democrat	-0.24***	-0.01	-0.42***
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Rep. candidate × Republican	0.43***	0.48***	0.39***
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Rep. candidate × Independent	0.02	0.04	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Observations	924	470	454
R^2	0.134	0.170	0.149

Notes: The dependent variable in all columns is an indicator variable equal to 1 when respondent chooses Candidate A in the vignette experiment. All regressions include controls for gender, age group, race, income group, employment status, education, and macro-region fixed effects. Coefficients are not reported due to space constraints. Panel A reports the mean of the dependent variables for respondents who were assigned to the setting where the political affiliation of the candidates was not mentioned ("Mean"), and separately for Democrats ("Democrat mean") and Republicans ("Republican mean"). Panel B shows the treatment effects of Candidate A being a Democrat, and Panel C shows the treatment effects of Candidate A being a Republican. All panels report the coefficients from two different specifications, whose only difference is given by the interaction of the treatment effects. The first row shows the treatment effects of Candidate A being of a given party ("Democratic/Republican candidate") relative to the omitted category (no party affiliation setting). The following three rows show the treatment effects of Candidate A being of a given party interacted with the respondent's political affiliation (Dem/Rep candidate × Democrat," "Dem/Rep candidate × Republican", and "Dem/Rep candidate × Independent"). Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Why voting most corrupt and competent	Why voting least corrupt and competent
High-corruption setting	
(i) Candidate A was the better choice because they created more jobs and benefited the community.	(i) Candidate B was the lesser of two evils because they embezzled less money.
(ii) Since both candidates were corrupt, competence and effectiveness mattered more in making the decision.	(ii) Honesty and integrity are more important than competence, as corruption undermines trust and good governance.
Observations: 274	Observations: 217
Low-corruption setting	
(i) Candidate A was the better choice because they created more jobs and contributed more to the community.	(i) Candidate B was the lesser of two evils because they embezzled less money.
(ii) Since both candidates were corrupt, competence and effectiveness mattered more than the amount embezzled.	(ii) Honesty and integrity matter more than competence, as corruption causes greater harm in the long run.
Observations: 183	Observations: 301

Notes: On the left column, ChatGPT summaries of respondents' answers to the question: "When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate A which was both the most competent but also the most corrupt. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?" On the right column, ChatGPT summaries of respondents' answers to the question: "When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate B which was both the less corrupt but also the less competent. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?" Answers were analyzed separately depending if the respondent was assigned to the low- or high-corruption setting. Respondents were allowed to leave the text box empty. For this reason, the sample used in this table is smaller than the one from previous analyses.

TABLE A-5: CHATGPT SUMMARIES - INDEPENDENT RESPONDENTS

Why voting most corrupt and competent when Democrat

(i) Many respondents prioritized competency and job creation over corruption, believing that getting things done was more important than the amount embezzled.
(ii) Others felt both candidates were corrupt but chose the one aligned with their political ideology or viewed as the lesser of two evils.
Observations: 143

Why voting most corrupt and competent when Republican

(i) Many respondents prioritized competency and job creation over corruption, believing that if both candidates were corrupt, the one who got more done was the better choice.

(ii) Others felt that both candidates were equally corrupt and instead based their decision on political ideology or personal values.
Observations: 145

Why voting least corrupt and competent when Democrat

(i) Many respondents prioritized honesty over competence, believing that corruption in government is unacceptable regardless of effectiveness.

(ii) Others chose the less corrupt candidate as the "lesser of two evils," often aligning their decision with political ideology.
Observations: 152

Why voting least corrupt and competent when Republican

(i) Many respondents prioritized honesty, believing that corruption is unacceptable and leads to greater harm than incompetence.
(ii) Others saw the decision as choosing the "lesser of two evils," favoring the candidate who stole less money, even if they were slightly less competent.
Observations: 169

Notes: ChatGPT summaries of independent respondents' answers by the party affiliation of the candidate, to the following questions: "When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate A which was both the most competent but also the most corrupt. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?"; "When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate B which was both the less corrupt but also the less competent. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?" Respondents were allowed to leave the text box empty. For this reason, the sample used in this table is smaller than the one from previous analyses.

A-3 ChatGPT Summaries

In Section 4, I discuss ChatGPT summaries of respondents' open-ended question answers to why they decided to vote for a particular candidate in the vignette experiment.

The open-ended questions were asked at the end of the survey and they read as follows:

- [If they selected Candidate A:] *When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate A which was both the most competent but also the most corrupt. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?*

- [If they selected Candidate B:] *When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate B which was both the less corrupt but also the less competent. Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?*

While respondents were not forced to answer these questions, the vast majority of respondents provided some textual answer. More precisely, 2,930 out of the 3,002 completes. I did not edit the responses in any way before showing them to ChatGPT.

Before feeding the answers to ChatGPT, they were regrouped by vignette setting and by the party affiliation of the respondents, as discussed more in detail in Section 4.

Following Lobeck and Støstad (2023), the exact ChatGPT prompt was:

I will give you about N arguments, one on each line, for why respondents decided to vote for a particular candidate. Each argument is from one person. I want to know what the most common arguments are. Summarize these arguments in two arguments. Each of these two summary arguments you give me should be one sentence at most. Each argument should be concise and to the point. You should not give any additional information. You should use simple wording and intuitive language. The format should be:
(i) ARGUMENT 1 (ii) ARGUMENT 2
Below follows the arguments from my respondents. Thank you.

I prompted ChatGPT with the identical text prompt in all cases – only changing the number of arguments provided. I only elicited the ChatGPT response once for each subgroup, and did not edit the ChatGPT responses in any way.

A-4 Questionnaire

Consent

1. I am a non-partisan academic researcher from Boston University. No matter what your political views are, by completing this survey, you are contributing to our knowledge as a society. This survey will give you an opportunity to express your own views.

   It is very important for the success of this research that you answer honestly and read the questions very carefully before answering. Anytime you don't know an answer, please give your best guess. However, be sure to spend enough time reading and understanding the question. To ensure the quality of survey data, your responses will be subject to sophisticated statistical control methods. Responding without adequate effort may result in your responses being flagged for low quality and not used.

   This survey takes an average of about 8 minutes to complete.

   Note: Your participation in this study is purely voluntary. Your name will never be recorded. Results may include summary data, but you will never be personally identified. If you have any question about this study, you may contact me at mferroni@bu.edu

   Yes, I would like to take part in this study, and confirm that I AM A US RESIDENT 18 or older; No, I would not like to participate

Screening Questions

1. Were you born in the United States?
   Yes; No.

2. What is your gender?
   Male; Female.

3. What is your age?

4. What was your TOTAL household income, before taxes, last year?
   $0-$9,999; $10,000-$14,999; $15,000-$19,999; $20,000-$29,999; $30,000-$39,999; $40,000-$49,999; $50,000-$69,999; $70,000-$89,999; $90,000-$109,999; $110,000-$149,999; $150,000-$199,999; $200,000+.

Background Questions

1. How would you describe your ethnicity/race?
   European American/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Asian/Asian American; Mixed race; Other.

2. Which State do you live in?

3. Which ZIP code do you live in?

4. Please indicate your marital status.
   Never married; Married; Legally separated or divorced; Widowed.

5. How many children do you have?
   I do not have children; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 or more.

6. Were both of your parents born in the United States?
   Yes; No.

7. Which category best describes your highest level of education?
   Eighth Grade or less; Some High School; High School degree / GED; Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA).

8. *[If Some college or more:]* What is/was your major field of study in college? If multiple degrees apply, please select the field corresponding to your last degree.
Agriculture; Anthropology; Architecture; Arts; Biology; Business; Chemistry; Computer sciences; Design; Earth sciences; Economics; Education; Engineering and technology; Environmental studies and forestry; Family and consumer science; Geography; History; Human physical performance and recreation; Journalism, media studies and communication; Law; Library and museum studies; Linguistic and languages; Logic; Mathematics; Medicine; Military science; Philosophy; Physics; Political science; Psychology; Public administration; Religion; Social work; Sociology; Space sciences; System science; Transportation; Other.

9. What is your current employment status?
Full-time employee; Part-time employee; Self-employed or small business owner; Unemployed and looking for work; Stay at home wife/husband; Student; Not currently working and not looking for work; Retiree.

10. *[If Full-time employee; Part-time employee; Self-employed or small business owner:]* Which category best describes your main occupation?
Managers *(chief executives; senior officials; legislators; managing directors; administrative and commercial managers; production managers; hotel and restaurant managers; retail and wholesale trade managers);* **Professionals** *(scientists; mathematicians; engineers; architects; designers; doctors; nurses; paramedical practitioners; professors; teachers; business and administration professionals; finance professionals; software and application developers and analysts; database and network professionals; legal professionals; librarians; curators; social and religious professionals; authors; journalists; creative and performing artists);* **Technicians and associate professionals** *(science technicians; engineering technicians; mining, manufacturing and construction supervisors; ship and aircraft controllers and technicians; medical technicians; business and administration associate professionals; legal associate professionals; sports and fitness workers; artistic, cultural and culinary associate professionals; information and communications technicians);* **Clerical support workers** *(general office clerks; secretaries; customer services clerks; numerical clerks; material-recording and transport clerks);* **Service and sales workers** *(travel attendants, conductors and guides; cooks; waiters and bartenders; hairdressers and beauticians; building and housekeeping supervisors; sales workers; cashiers and ticket clerks; personal care workers; protective services workers);* **Agricultural workers** *(crop growers; animal producers; forestry workers; fishery workers; agricultural and fishery laborers) ;* **Craft and related trades workers** *(building trades workers; blacksmiths; machinery mechanics and repairers; handicraft workers; electrical and electronic trades workers; food processing workers; wood treaters; garment workers);* **Plant and machine operators, and assemblers** *(stationary plant and machine operators; assemblers; drivers; mobile plant operators);* **Elementary occupations** *(cleaners and helpers; mining and construction laborers; manufacturing laborers; transport and storage laborers; street and related sales and service workers; refuse workers);* **Armed forces occupations**.

11. On economic policy matters, where do you see yourself on the liberal/conservative spectrum?
Very liberal; Liberal; Moderate; Conservative; Very conservative.

12. In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?
Republican; Democrat; Independent.

13. *[If Republican:]* Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
Strong Republican; Not very strong Republican.

14. *[If Democrat:]* Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
Strong Democrat; Not very strong Democrat.

15. Did you vote in the last presidential election?
Yes; No.

16. *[If Yes to Q15:]* In the last presidential election, you supported:
Hillary Clinton; Donald Trump; Jill Stein; Gary Johnson.

17. *[If No to Q15:]* Even if you did NOT vote, please indicate the candidate that you were most likely to have voted for or who represents your views most closely.
    Hillary Clinton; Donald Trump; Jill Stein; Gary Johnson.

18. Are you registered to vote?
    Yes; No.

19. *[If Yes to Q18:]* When you registered to vote, did you registered as a Republican, a Democrat, or neither of the two?
    Republican; Democrat; Neither.

20. *[If Yes to Q18:]* There are many types of elections such as federal elections for president and members of Congress, primary elections where voters choose party nominees, local elections for city council, and special elections when vacancies arise in between scheduled elections. Which best describes how often you vote, since you became eligible?
    Every election without exception; Almost every election, may have missed one or two; Some elections; Rarely; Don't vote in election.

21. *[If No to Q18:]* Why are you not registered to vote?
    I don't want to vote, so I don't need to register; It's not convenient; I don't know how to register; I don't want to register for privacy or security reasons; I intend to register, but haven't gotten around to it; I do not have the ID or documentation required to register; I am not eligible due to a felony conviction; There has not been a candidate or issue that has inspired me to register,

22. *[If No to Q18 or didn't vote in every election in Q20:]* The following are some reasons why someone would not want to vote. Please indicate which is a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why you do not want to vote.

    22.1 I'm not interested in politics.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.2 Voting has little to do with the way real decisions are made.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.3 I just don't bother and doing it is not worth my time.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.4 I don't see a difference between the candidates or parties.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.5 I don't like any of the candidates on the ballot.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.6 My one vote isn't going to affect how things turn out.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.7 I am afraid of being turned down at the voting pools.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

    22.8 I have been unable to vote due to a disability or language barrier.
        Major reason; Minor reason; Not a reason.

23. Did you vote in the 2018 midterms elections?
    Yes; No.

24. *[If Yes to Q23:]* Which party did you vote for?
    Republican Party; Democratic Party; Other.

25. *[If No to Q23:]* Which party would you have liked to support?
    Republican Party; Democratic Party; Other.

26. Did you vote in the last mayoral election of your city?
    Yes; No.

27. How often do you attend church, mosque, synagogue or another place of worship?
    Every week; Almost every week; About once a month; Seldom; Never.

28. How often do you discuss politics with your friends and family?
    Very frequently; Frequently; Rarely; Never.

29. If you had to estimate how much time in total you spend every day on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, it would be:
    None at all; Some, but less than 30 minutes; Between 30 minutes and one hour; Between 1 and 2 hours; Between 2 and 4 hours; More than 4 hours.

30. Thinking about various sources of news available today, what would you say is your main source of news about current events in the U.S. and around the world?
    TV; Newspapers (paper version); News websites and online newspapers; Radio; Internet (except news websites); Word of mouth; Other; None, I don't follow the news.

31. *[If TV:]* Please specify which TV channel:
    ABC; CBS; CNN; FOX; MSNBC; NBC; Other.

32. *[If News websites:]* Please specify which news website or online newspaper:
    CNN; Fox News; Google News; Huffington Post; Mail Online; NBC News; The New York Times; The Washington Post; Yahoo! News; Other.

33. *[If Internet:]* Please specify which website or social network:
    Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; Snapchat; YouTube; Pinterest; LinkedIn; Other.

Salience Treatment

Radomization: 1/2: News Headlines; 1/2: Control Group.

FIGURE A-1: SALIENCE TREATMENT

Salience Experiment

Radomization 1: 1/2: Low corruption setting; 1/2: High corruption setting.
Radomization 2: 1/3: No party affiliation; 1/3: Candidate A Democrat; 1/3: Candidate A Republican.

1. Imagine that you were living in a different city in the US and that you were voting in the mayoral election. There are two candidates who are running against each other.

   Candidate A Democrat: The first candidate (who we will call Candidate A) is supported by the Democratic Party, while the second (who we will call Candidate B) is supported by the Republican Party. **Candidate A Republican:** The first candidate (who we will call Candidate A) is supported by the Republican Party, while the second (who we will call Candidate B) is supported by the Democratic Party.

   Both candidates already have some experience in office. In a previous term in office, the first candidate (who we will call Candidate A) has been able to sign government contracts that brought new businesses to the city, generating 3,000 new jobs. The second candidate (who we will call Candidate B) has also been able to sign government contracts that instead ended up generating 2,000 new jobs.

   Low corruption setting: In their previous terms in office, both candidates were indicted for appropriation of public funds for personal purpose. Allegedly, Candidate A embezzled $30,000 while Candidate B embezzled $10,000.
   High corruption setting: In their previous terms in office, both candidates were indicted for appropriation of public funds for personal purpose. Allegedly, Candidate A embezzled $80,000 while Candidate B embezzled $60,000.

   During the course of the investigations, both candidates settled to repay an undisclosed fine while continuing to plead not guilty.

   If you were voting, which of the two candidates would you be more likely to support?

   Candidate A; Candidate B.

Attitudes toward corruption

1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?
   Can be trusted; Cannot be trusted.

2. How often do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?
   Never; Only some of the time; Most of the time; Always.

3. Which are the most important factors that influence your decision when voting for a local candidate? Please rank the following factors by dragging them.

   - *Education*
   - *Honesty*
   - *Knowledge and capability*
   - *Political experience*
   - *Political ideology*

4. Have you ever voted for a politician who you believed had embezzled public funds?
   Yes; No.

5. Considering your experience or what you know about local politicians, how common would you say it is for these politicians to accept bribes or embezzle public funds?
   Very common; Somewhat common; Not very common; Not at all common.

6. Do you agree with the following statement: "A politician who carries out a lot of public works, even if he or she robs a little, is better than a politician who carries out few public works and does not rob at all."
Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree.

7. Which kind of mayor would you prefer?
Not totally honest as long as he or she resolves the city's problems; Totally honest even if not that efficient.

Policies against corruption

1. Do you believe the government should allocate more resources to the fight against corruption? Keep in mind that, in order to finance new policies, other types of spending would have to be scaled down or taxes would have to be raised.
I very strongly oppose the allocation of more resources to the fight against corruption; I oppose the allocation of more resources to the fight against corruption; I neither oppose nor support; I support the allocation of more resources to the fight against corruption; I very strongly support the allocation of more resources to the fight against corruption.

2. Please let me know how effective do you think these policies are in reducing corruption:

    2.1 Better monitoring from independent agencies.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.2 Cutting of red tape.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.3 Higher government salaries.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.4 Higher government transparency.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.5 More severe penalties.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.6 Reduce public investments.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

    2.7 Term limits for local government.
    Very effective; Effective; Somewhat effective; Not very effective; Not effective at all.

Feedback, motivation, and perceived bias

1. Do you feel that the survey was biased?
Yes, it was against corruption; Yes, it was accepting corruption; No, it did not felt biased.

2. *[If chose Candidate A:]* When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate A which was both the most competent but also the most corrupt.
Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?
Text entry box.

3. *[If chose Candidate B:]* When you had to choose for which candidate to vote, you decided to vote for candidate B which was both the less corrupt but also the less competent.
Could you please let us know what made you take this decision?
Text entry box.

4. *[If treated:]* Do you think that reading the newspaper headlines somehow influenced your following answers?
Text entry box.

5. Please feel free to leave any feedback or impression regarding this survey.
Text entry box.

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