Bureaucratic Quality and Electoral Accountability

Tara Slough – NYU

January 2023

In search of accountability...

Pervasive "bad governance" in developing democracies.

- Corruption, lack of public goods and services.
- Cited as evidence of **limited accountability**.
- Recent work on information as an antidote to these problems (e.g., Dunning et al. 2019)

Challenges:

1. **Conflicting findings** in studies of information and accountability.
2. **Asymmetric** treatment of outcomes of limited accountability in developed vs. developing democracies.

Co-production of public goods

Politicians and bureaucrats co-produce public goods:

- Politicians allocate funding.
- Bureaucrats produce/implement public goods.

Globally, bureaucratic quality varies substantially.

Bureaucratic quality drives the efficiency of public goods investments, which influences:

- Politician incentives to allocate budget to public goods vs. rents.
- Voters' ability to update on politician type, select "competent" types.

Overview

Theory: Simple model of electoral accountability with a voter, a politician, and a bureaucrat.

- Characterize equilibria at different levels of bureaucratic quality.
- Equilibria imply distinct empirical implications of electoral accountability.

Overview

Theory: Simple model of electoral accountability with a voter, a politician, and a bureaucrat.

Design: Theoretically-structured meta-study to test empirical implications against two "nested" corner cases.

- Extend four studies of accountability of Brazilian mayors.
  - 3 studies on corruption and accountability.
  - 1 study on incumbency disadvantage.

Overview

Theory: Simple model of electoral accountability with a voter, a politician, and a bureaucrat.

Design: Theoretically-structured meta-study to test empirical implications against two "nested" corner cases.

Findings: Data is consistent with the (full) model, not the alternatives.

- Politicians allocate funds to rents (instead of public goods) as a function of bureaucratic quality.
- Voters update differently at different levels of bureaucratic quality.
- Voter retention of incumbents varies in bureaucratic quality.

Related literature

1. Bureaucracy and electoral accountability. (Fox and Jordan, 2011; Ujhelyi, 2014; Yazaki,2018; Li et al., 2019; Raffler and Martin, 2019; Foarta 2022)

2. Empirical studies of information and accountability. (Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2012; Chong et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2011; de Figueiredo et al., 2011; Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2016; Adida et al., 2017; Larreguy et al., 2020; Arias et al., 2019; Bhandari et al., 2019; Boas et al., 2019; Platas and Raffler, 2019; Cruz et al., 2018, 2019; Varjão, 2019)

3. Cumulation and secondary analysis of reduced-form causal estimands. (Banerjee and Duflo, 2009; Dunning et al., 2019; Slough and Tyson, 2022a, 2022b)

Theory

Model overview

Simple 2-period accountability model.

Players: Politician, Bureaucrat, Voter.

P of type $\theta \in \{\underline{\theta}, \overline{\theta}\}$ – Incompent or competent.

- Ability to "**get things done**"
- Monitor at rate $\overline{\theta}$ or $\underline{\theta}$, where $0 < \underline{\theta} < \overline{\theta} < 1$
- Private information to P and B
- Voter's prior: $\Pr(\theta = \overline{\theta}) = \pi \in (0,1)$

Public goods production

In each period, public goods co-produced by P and B.

With budget normalized to 1, P allocates:

- a_t to public goods.
- $1 - a_t$ to private rents.

Bureaucrat, of quality $q > 1$, exerts effort $e_t \in [0,1]$ to produce the public good

- q is exogenous, common knowledge.

Public goods g_t produced according to:

$$g_t = \begin{cases} qa_t & \text{with probability } e_t \\ 0 & \text{with probability } 1 - e_t \end{cases}$$

Election, voter's utility

Voter observes a signal, z, of:

$$z = \begin{cases} g_1 & \text{with probability } p \\ \varnothing & \text{with probability } 1-p \end{cases}$$

- $p = 0$: no voter information $\Rightarrow$ "no accountability"
- Used to derive predictions "with" and "without" voter information

Voter's utility:

$$E[u_v(i)] = E[g_2^i|z] + \phi$$
$$E[u_v(c)] = E[g_2^c]$$

- where $\phi \sim U[-b, b]$, for $b > q$, is a valence shock
- Challenger assumed to act as a first-period incumbent.

Utilities, ctd.

Politician:

- If in office:

$$U_t^P = \underbrace{1 - a_t}_{\text{Rents}} + \underbrace{g_t}_{\text{PG}}$$

- If not in office, U_t^P normalized to 0
- No discounting.

Bureaucrat:

- Recall that monitoring rate is $\theta \in (0,1)$:

$$U_t^B = -\theta(1 - e_t) - \frac{e_t^2}{2}$$

- Bureaucrat is not forward-looking.

Sequence, equilibrium concept

Sequence:

1. Nature determines θ_1.
2. The incumbent allocates a_1 to the public good.
3. The bureaucrat exerts effort e_1 to produce g_1.
4. With probability p, the voter observes $z = g_1$ and forms posterior $\mu(z)$. ϕ is realized and the voter chooses incumbent or challenger.
5. The incumbent allocates a_2^i (if re-elected), challenger allocates a_2^c (if not re-elected) to the public good.
6. Bureaucrat exerts effort e_2^i or e_2^c to produce g_2^i or g_2^c, respectively.

Solution concept: Perfect Bayesian Equilibria (PBE) with intuitive criterion refinement.

Analysis

Bureaucrat's optimal effort (in both periods):

$$e_t^* = \theta_t$$

In a second term, a politician allocates:

$$a_2^{i*} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } q \geq \frac{1}{\theta_2} \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$$

- Recall that $E[g_2^i] = q a_2^i \theta_2 \rightarrow$ Politician type (θ) and bureaucratic quality (q) are complements.

Voter's re-election decision

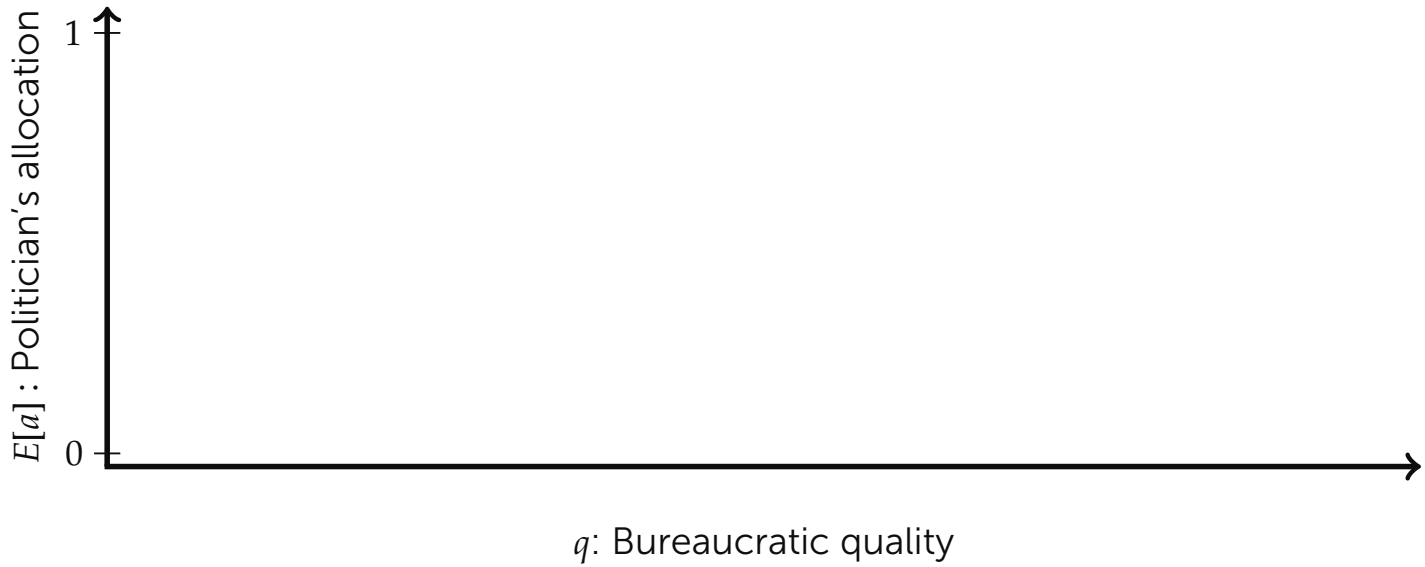
Voters re-elect if $E[u_v(i)] > E[u_v(c)]$ implying:

$$\Pr(\text{re-election}) = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{E[g_2^i|z] - E[g_2^c]}{2b}$$

Recall that voter may or may not observe $z \in \{0, qa_t\}$:

- With probability $1 - p$ voter does not observe z and so $\mu = \pi$.
- With probability p voter observes z, but informativeness of public goods signal depends on politician allocation behavior!

Equilibria



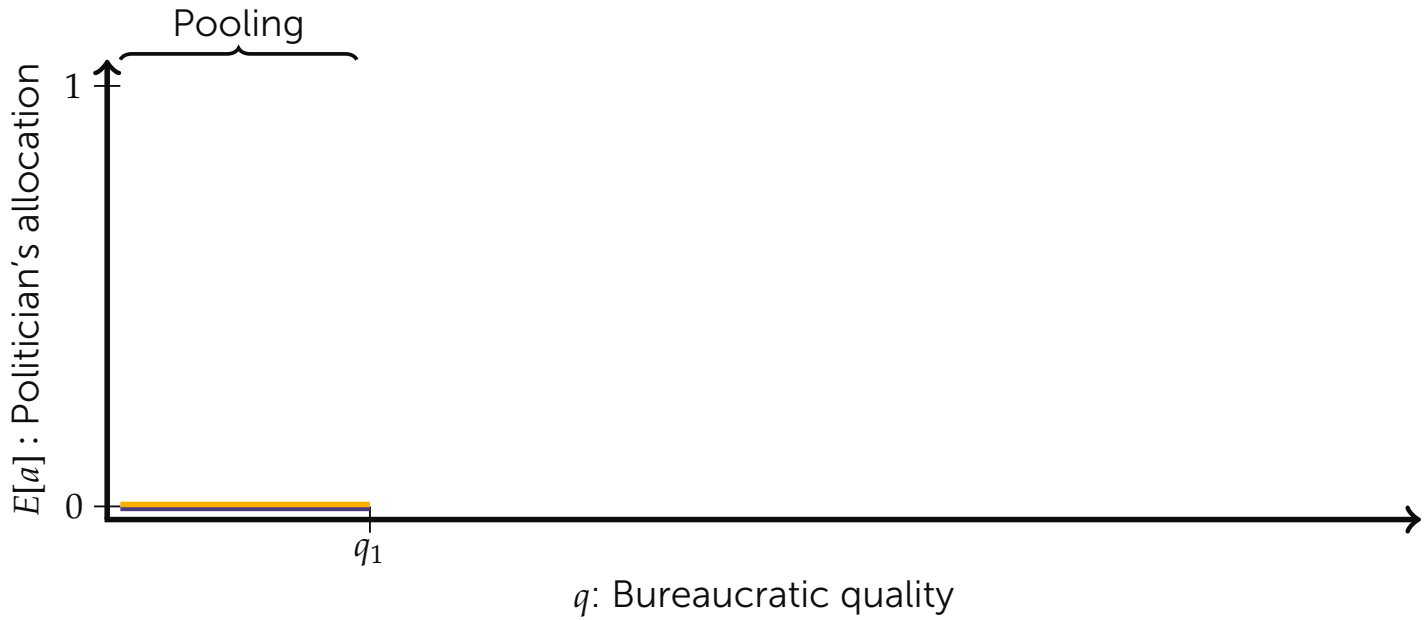
Voter's $\mu|z = q$

Voter's $\mu|z = 0$

Voter's $\mu|z = \varnothing$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Equilibria



Voter's $\mu|z = q$

Voter's $\mu|z = 0$

Voter's $\mu|z = \varnothing$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Equilibria

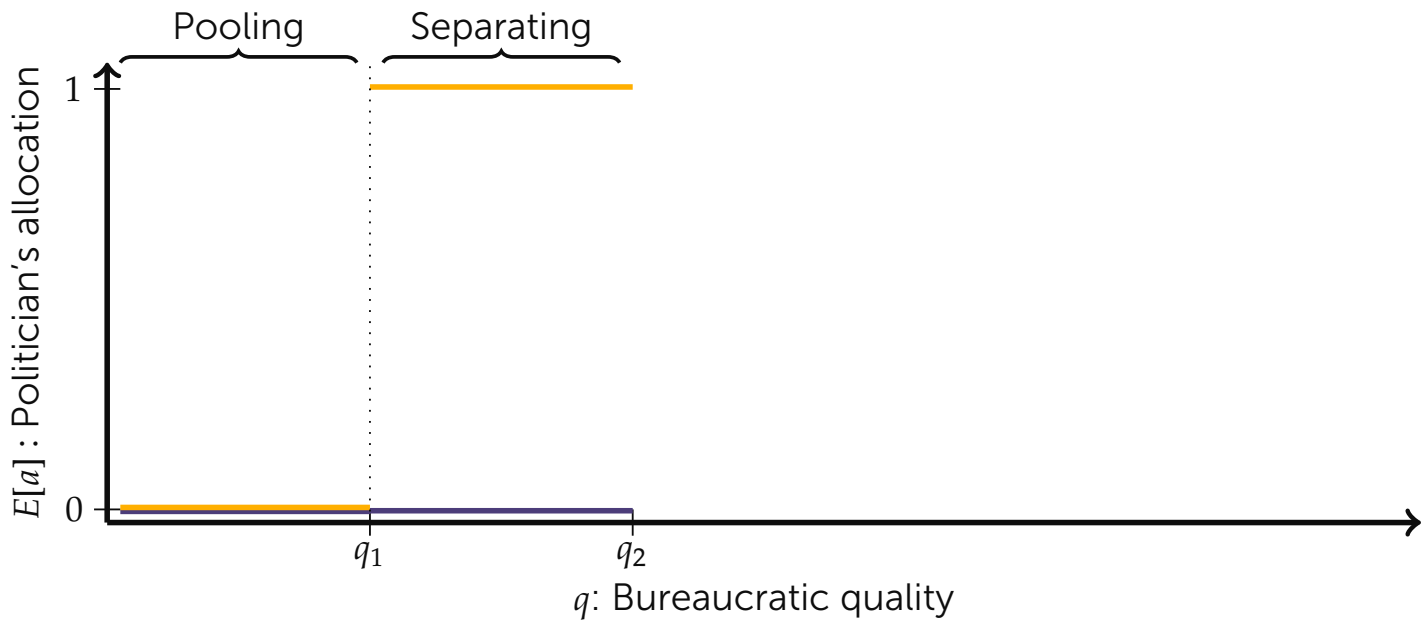
Voter's $\mu|z = q$ $(\mu = 1)$

Voter's $\mu|z = 0$ $\mu = \pi$

Voter's $\mu|z = \varnothing$ $\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Equilibria



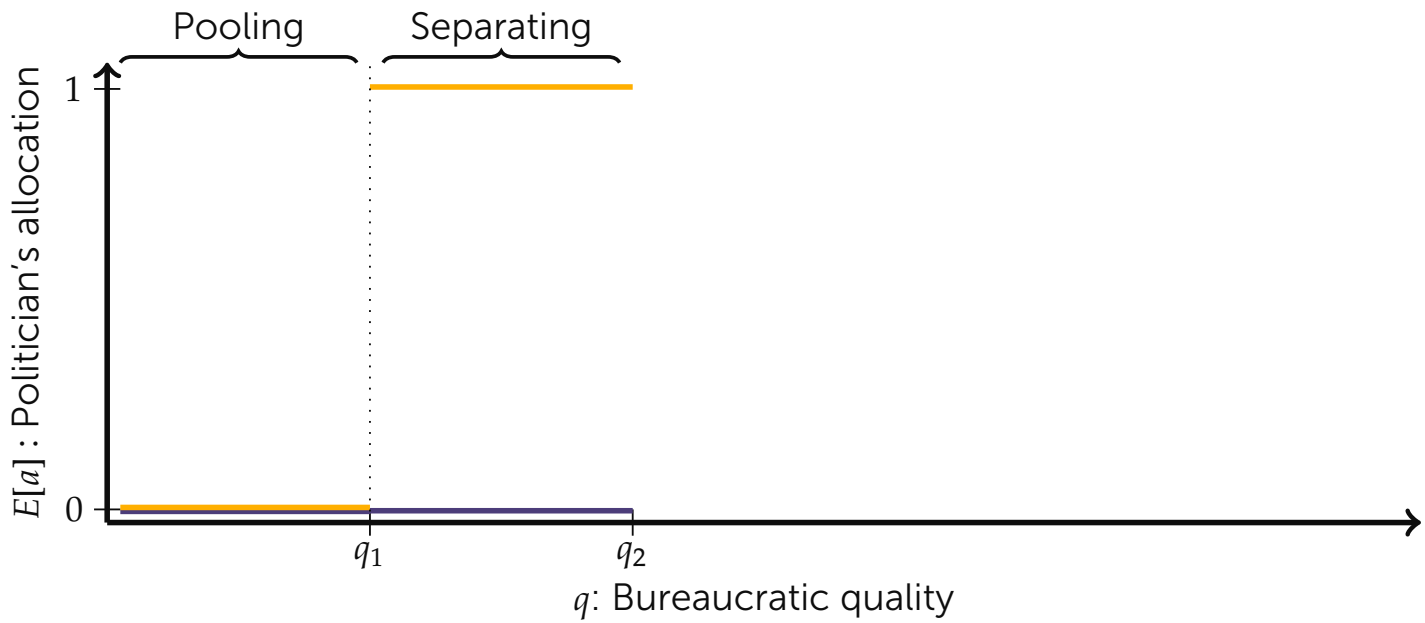
Voter's $\mu|z = q$ $(\mu = 1)$

Voter's $\mu|z = 0$ $\mu = \pi$

Voter's $\mu|z = \varnothing$ $\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

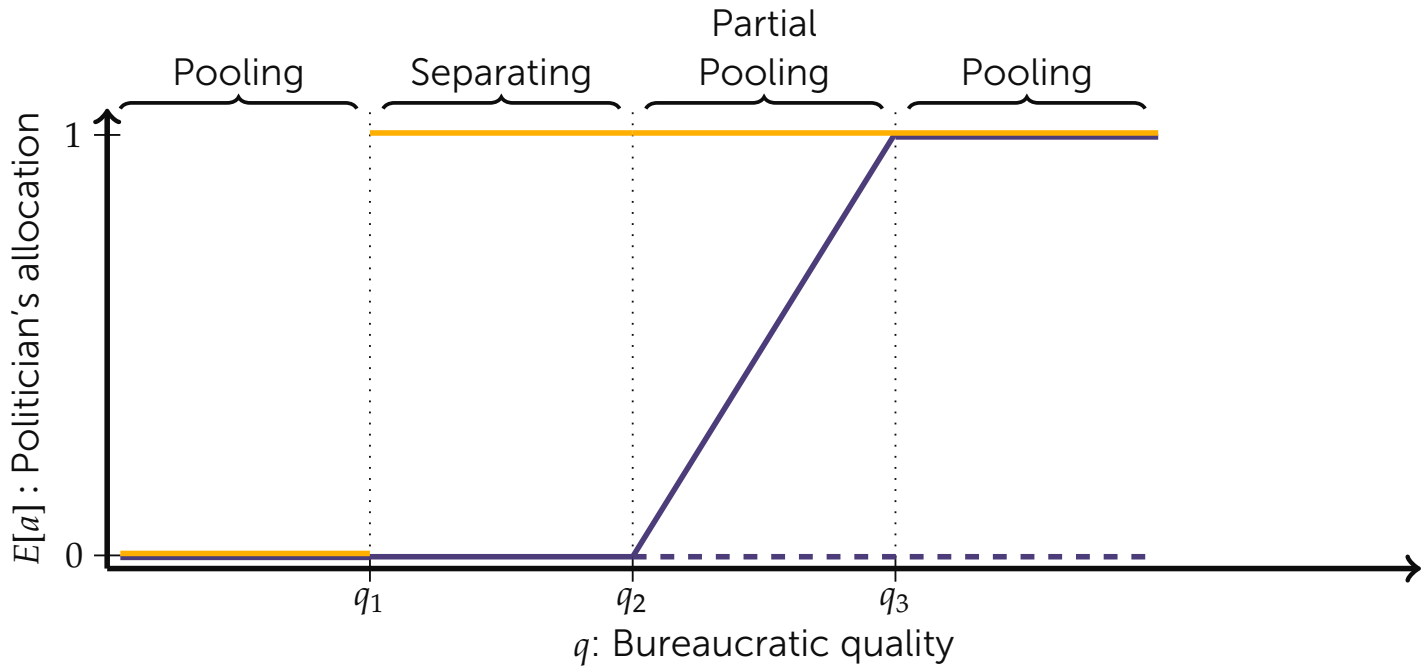
Equilibria



Voter's $\mu \mid z = q$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu < \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

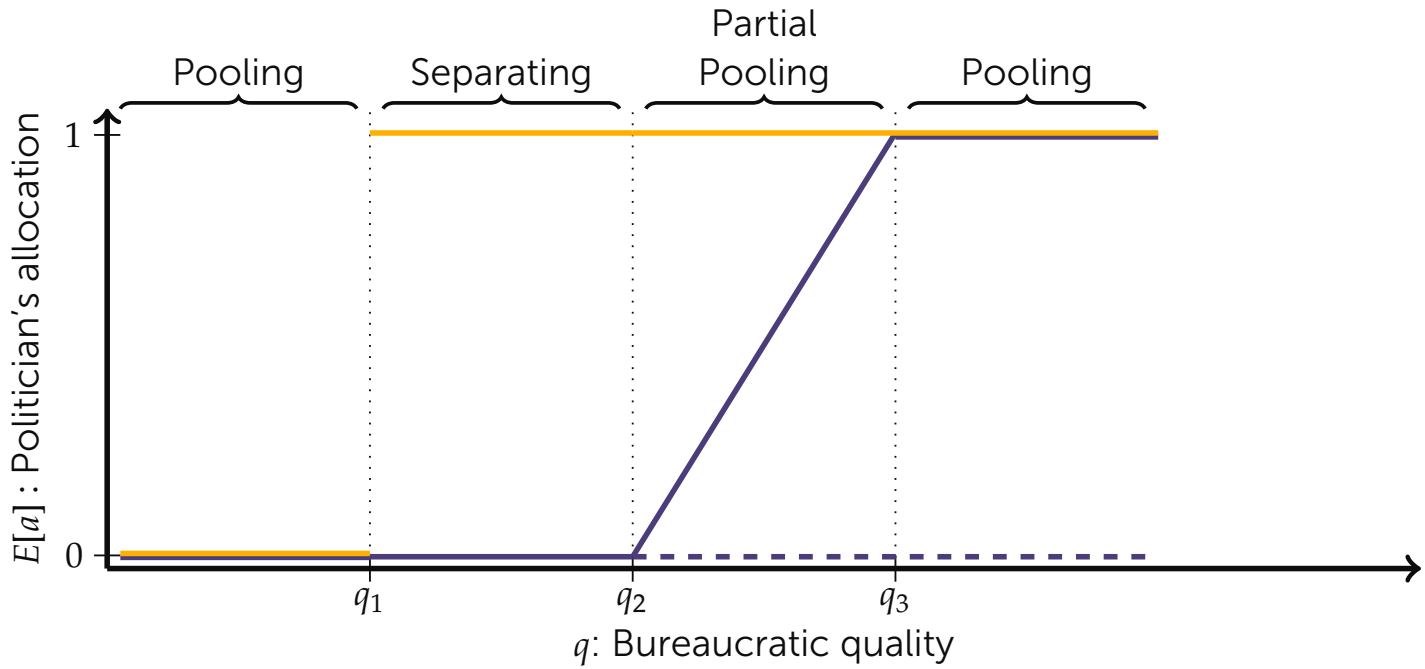
Equilibria



Voter's $\mu \mid z = q$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu < \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

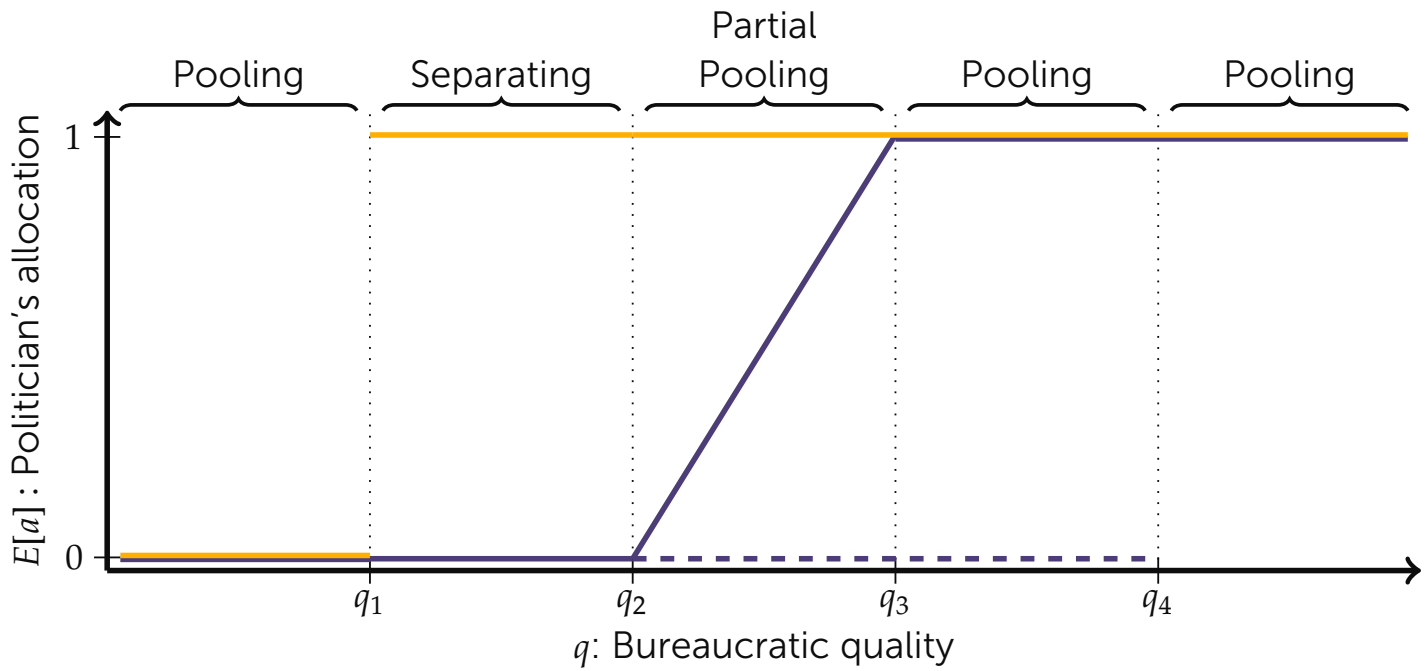
Equilibria



Voter's $\mu \mid z = q$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$	$\mu > \pi$	$\mu > \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

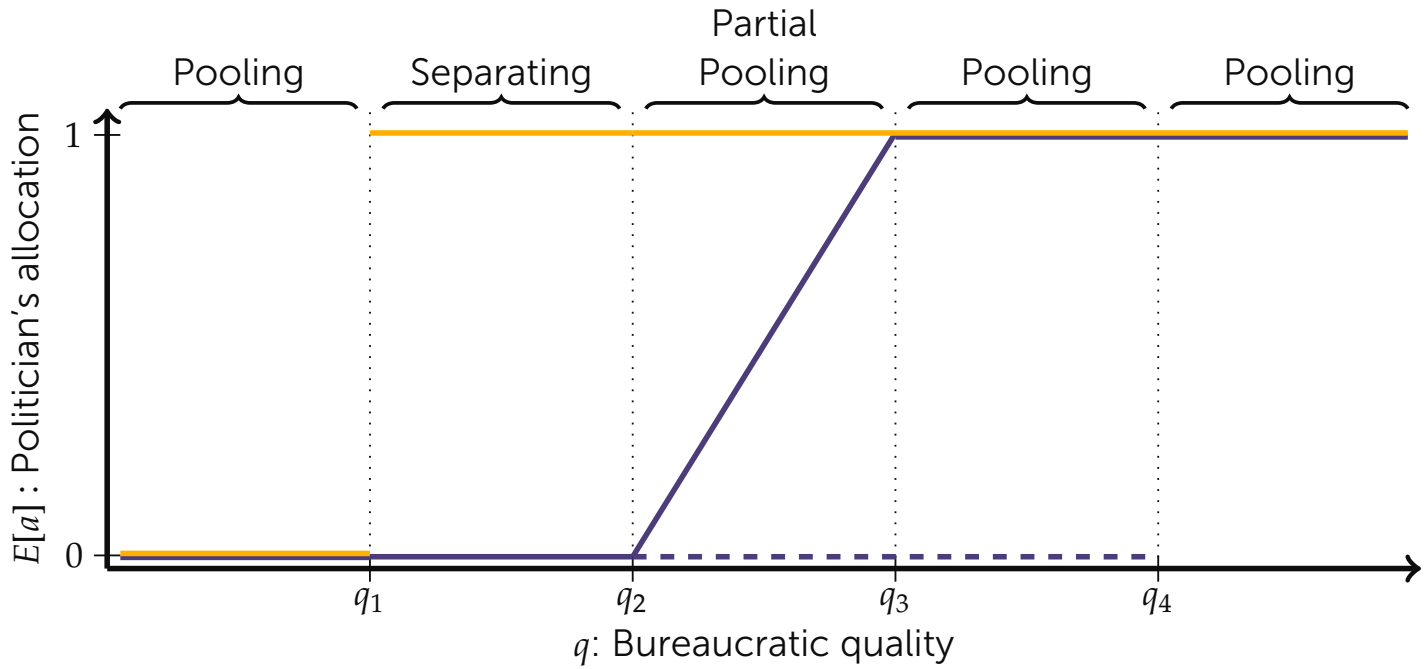
Equilibria



Voter's $\mu \mid z = q$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$	$\mu > \pi$	$\mu > \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Equilibria

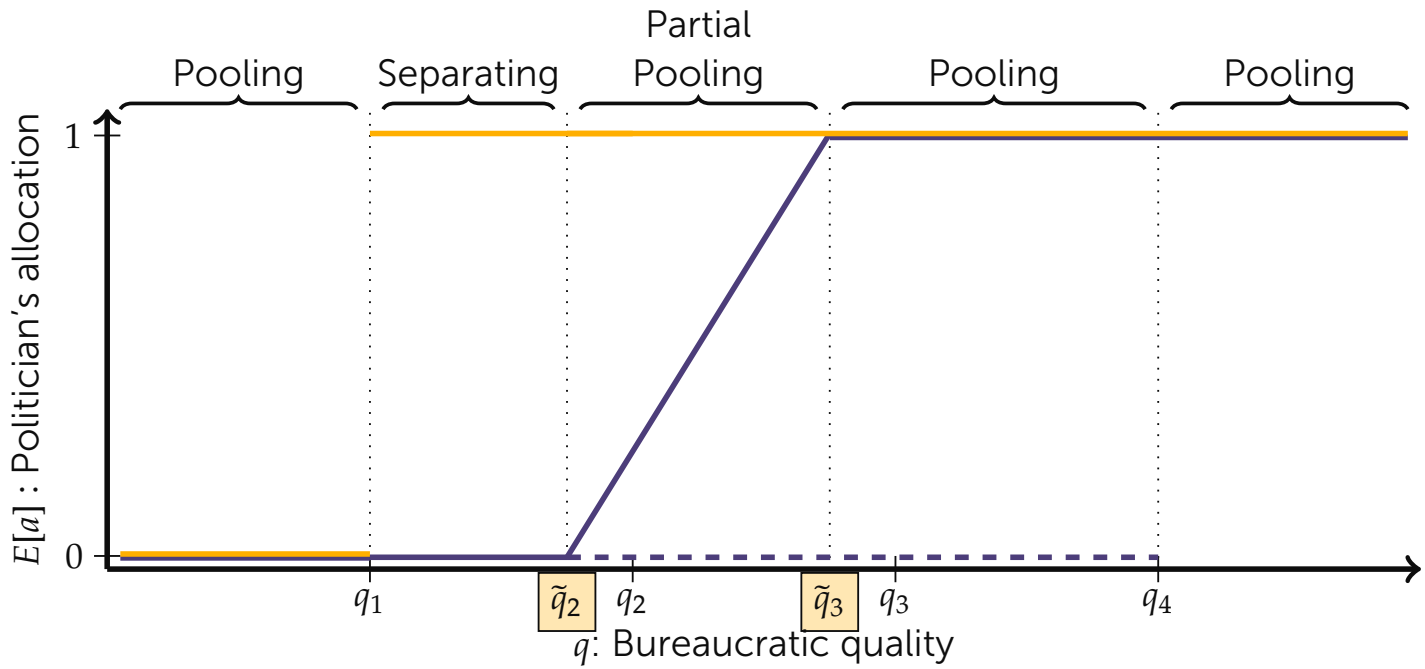


Voter's $\mu \mid z = q$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$	$\mu > \pi$	$\mu > \pi$	$\mu > \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$	$\mu < \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Extension: Observed Allocations

In some studies, voters are shown the politician's action not public goods.



Voter's $\mu|z = 1$

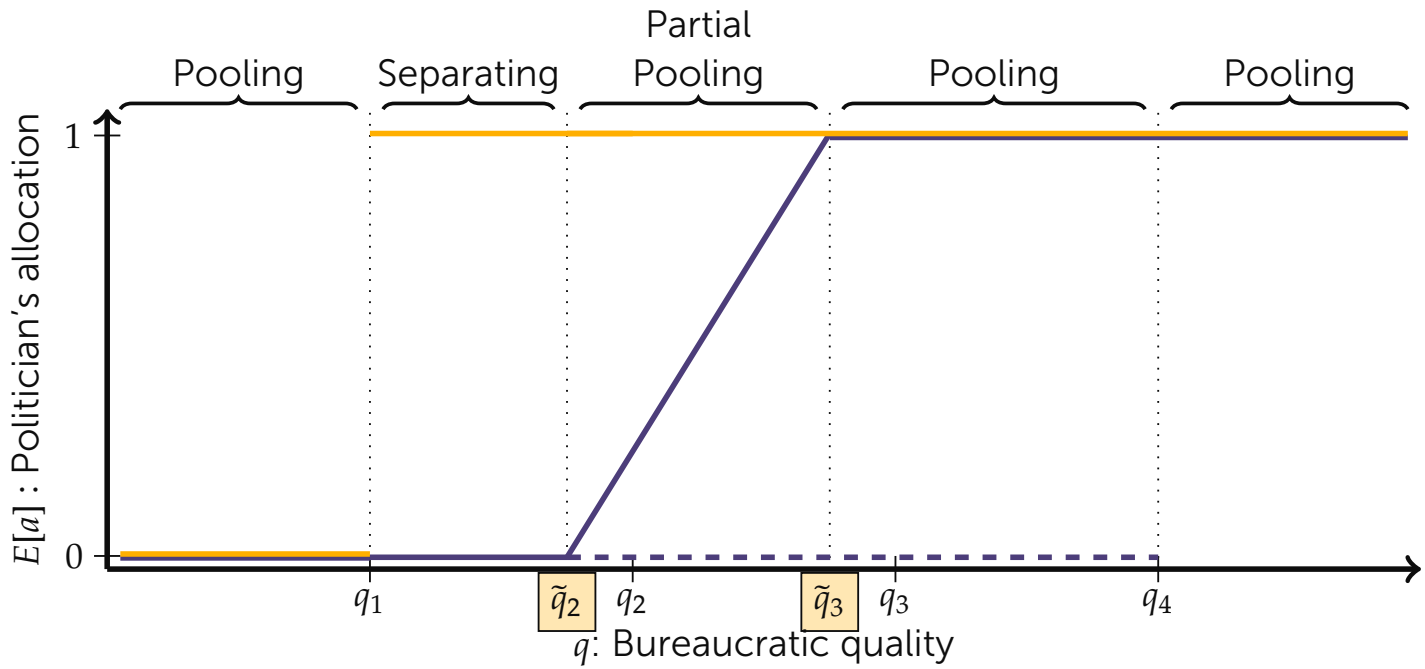
Voter's $\mu|z = 0$

Voter's $\mu|z = \varnothing$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Extension: Observed Allocations

In some studies, voters are shown the politician's action not public goods.



Voter's $\mu \mid z = 1$	$(\mu = 1)$	$\mu = 1$	$\mu > \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = 0$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = 0$	$\mu = 0$	$(\mu = 0)$	$(\mu = 0)$
Voter's $\mu \mid z = \varnothing$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$	$\mu = \pi$

$\theta = \underline{\theta}$ $\theta = \overline{\theta}$ $t = 1$ $t = 2$

Research Design

Empirical goal

Establish the plausibility of "general" model versus existing alternatives.

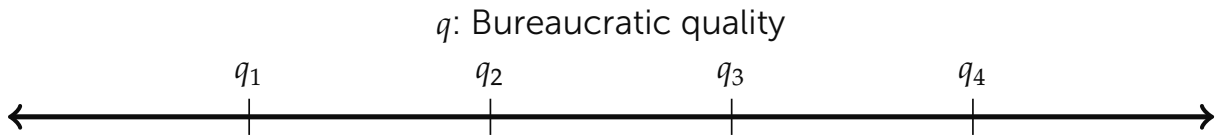
- But this is a dense literature with lots of findings.
- Two modal "existing alternatives" in the empirical literature.

Existing alternatives → two special cases of the model:

1. "No bureaucrat": competent type can always get public good produced; incompetent cannot ever get public good produced.
2. (Completely) uninformed voters: voters never observe the public goods (signal) output and therefore do not update.

General model vs. cases

General model:



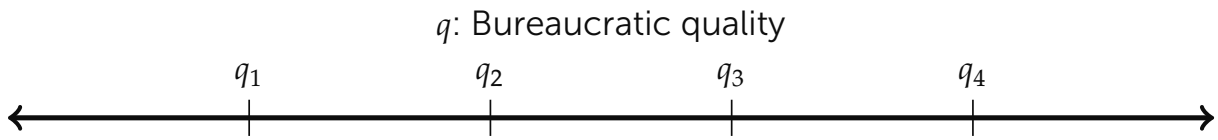
Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1$ w.p. k, $a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

Case #1: No bureaucrat, $\underline{\theta} = 0, \overline{\theta} = 1$:

Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$

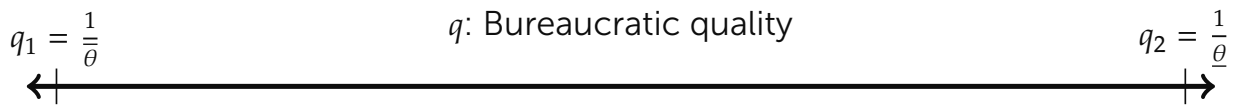
General model vs. cases

General model:



Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1$ w.p. k, $a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

Case #1: No bureaucrat, $\underline{\theta} = 0, \overline{\theta} = 1$:



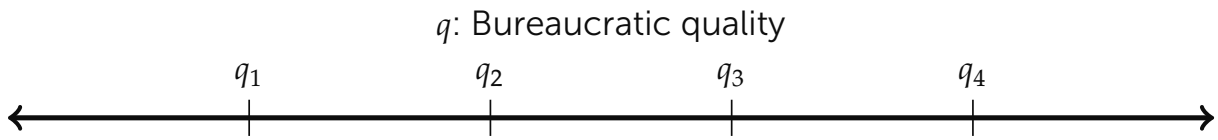
Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$

Case #2: Completely uninformed voters, $p = 0$:

Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

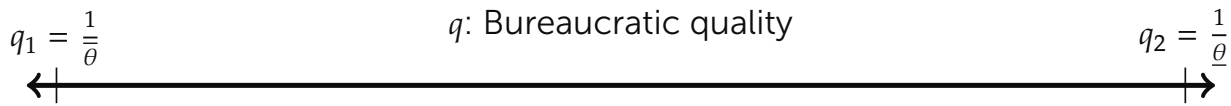
General model vs. cases

General model:



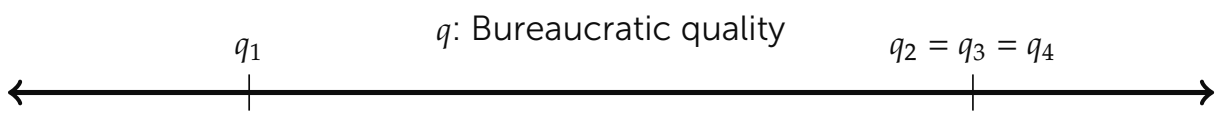
Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1$ w.p. k, $a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

Case #1: No bureaucrat, $\underline{\theta} = 0, \overline{\theta} = 1$:



Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$

Case #2: Completely uninformed voters, $p = 0$:



Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

Observable implications

Equilibria provide (interesting) empirical implications about:

- Politician's **allocation** behavior:
  - Affects **public goods** outputs.
- Voter's **beliefs** about the politician's type.
  - Different learning in different regions of bureaucratic quality.
- Voter's **voting** behavior.
  - Obviously voting behavior cannot be identical to beliefs.

We have measured all these pieces before in different places.

Theoretically-structured **meta-studies** incorporating results from multiple studies.

Accountability of Brazilian Mayors

Measuring bureaucratic quality, q

Measure: education level of the average municipal bureaucrat

- From IBGE's Municipal Information Survey (MUNIC), 2005-2014
- From counts bureaucrats by education level, measured ≈ triennially

What drives variation in bureaucratic quality?

- Variation in public sector hiring, contracting processes (Toral 2019)
- Local labor market conditions
  - Include: State FE; decile bins: % formal, avg. ed., GDP, population
  - Collectively these account for only 20% of variation in BQ

Validating bureaucratic quality measure

Assumption: bureaucratic quality is sticky, at least in the short-run.

- Autocorrelation (annualized), calculated from 5 rounds of data collection:

Measure	Autocorrelation
Quality (avg. education)	0.83
Per capita personnel	0.95
Total personnel (count)	0.99

- First-difference models reveal no evidence that changes in mayor or mayor's party yield differential changes in BQ.
- Also, no evidence of differential changes in the variance.

For accountability application: zero conditional association with community radio presence, given state FE, and % formal, avg. ed., GDP, population decile bins.

Measuring politicians' behavior through audits

Model emphasizes tradeoff between public goods and private rents:

- Public goods are co-produced.
- Rents measure actions of the politician.

Audit outcomes serve as the measure of politician allocation.

- Mayors responsible for proposing budget, monitoring execution. Gonçalves (2013)
- Lawsuits against audits from politicians, not bureaucrats. Seabra (2016)

Scope: First 11 rounds of randomized CGU audits, 2003-2004:

- DV is % of audited funds misused Avis et al. (2018)
- Here randomization is serving as random sampling.
- Abstracts from politician learning from audits Lichand et al. (2016); Avis et al. (2018)

Measuring citizen updating

Survey experimental evidence to measure updating

- Lots of recent consternation about non-alignment between survey, field experiments on corruption. Boas et al. (2019) and Incerti (2019)
- But they measure changes in beliefs and actions, respectively.
- Focus for talk: updating.

Nationally representative survey experiment fielded in Brazil Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2016); Winters and Weitz-Shapiro (2016)

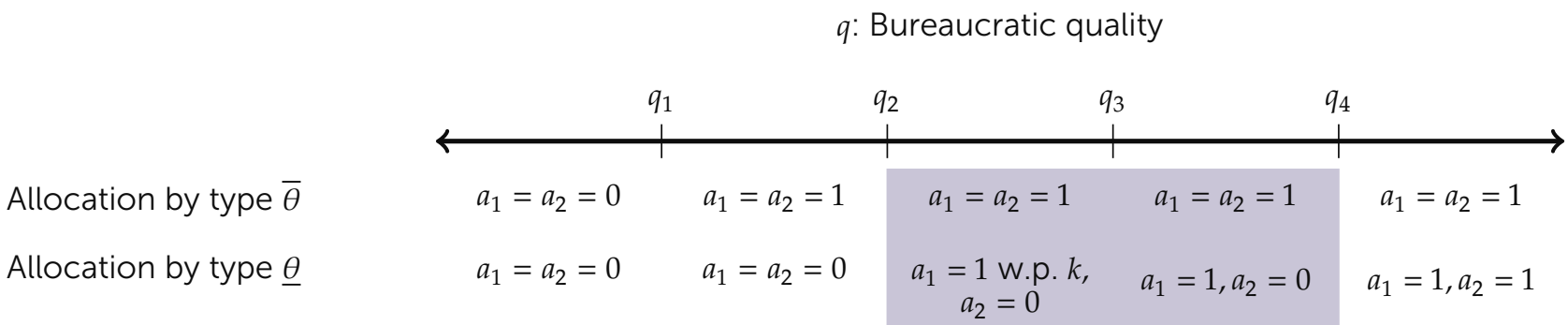
- Conducted in 2013 in 142 municipalities.
- Manipulation is information about audit outcome of hypothetical "Mayor Carlos" in "municipality like yours"
- Treatment conditions: (1) no information, (2) clean, or (3) corrupt
- Testing a new prediction for updating on a clean signal.

Measuring citizen voting behavior

Administrative electoral data on incumbent re-election

Focus on one equilibrium implication: variation in incumbency disadvantage across levels of bureaucratic quality

- Documented in Brazilian mayoral races Klasnja and Titunik (2017)
- Measured directly from electoral returns in close election t and election $t+1$
- Focus on three election cycles: 2000→2004, 2004→2008, 2008→2012



Test #1: Politician allocation behavior

Prediction: Allocation to rents is decreasing in bureaucratic quality.

Purpose: Distinguish general model from "no bureaucrat" case, where separating equilibrium emerges for all q.

Test: Sign of association between bureaucratic quality and rents extracted.

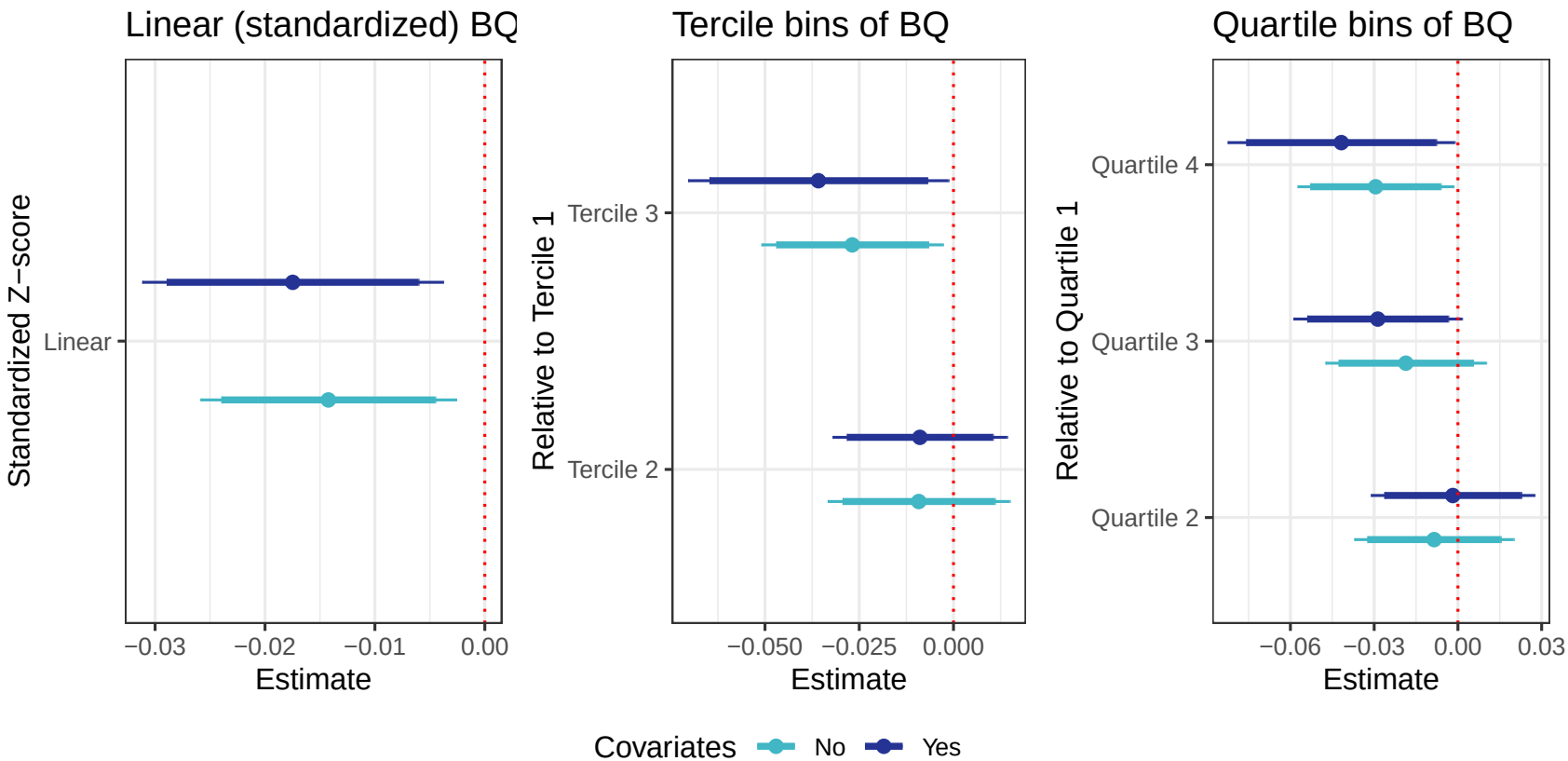
- Estimator:

$$\Upsilon_{msl} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Q_m + \gamma_s + \lambda_l + \delta \mathbf{X}_m + \epsilon_{msl}$$

- Prediction is that $\beta_1 < 0$.
- Note: Theory suggests non-linearities in Q_m. I use linear as well as tercile, quartile specifications of Q_m.

Result #1

- Negative association between bureaucratic quality and rents.

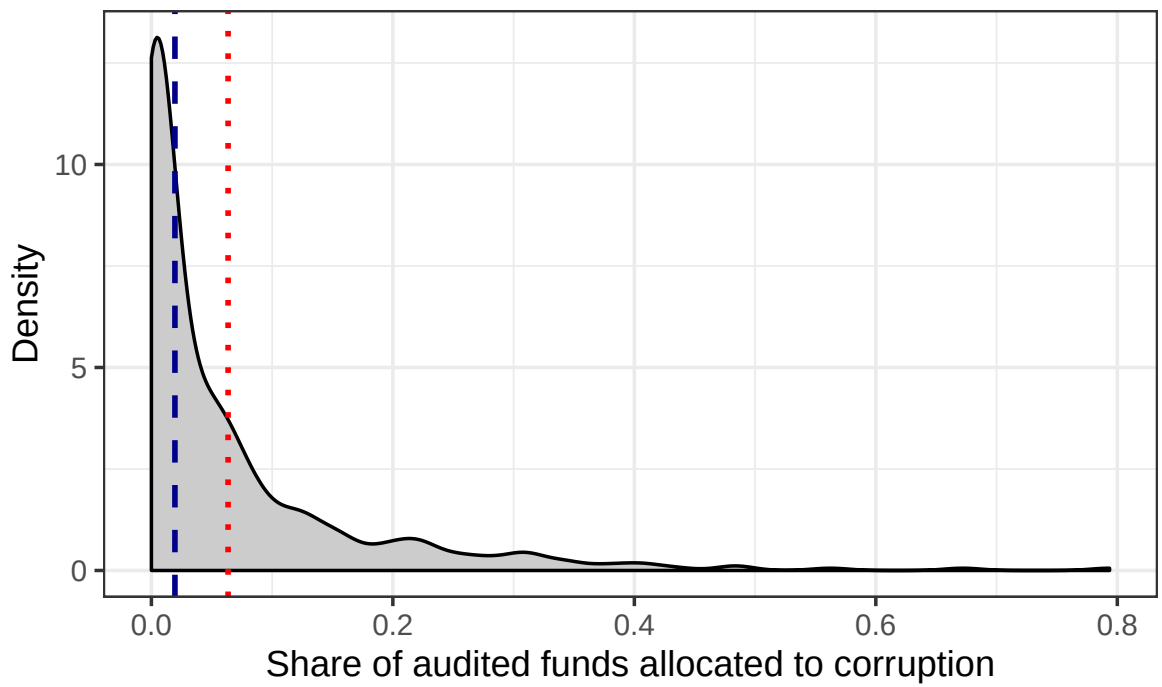


Association between q and % of audited funds misused.

Aside: What is the range of bureaucratic quality in Brazil?

q: Bureaucratic quality

Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1$ w.p. k, $a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 1$



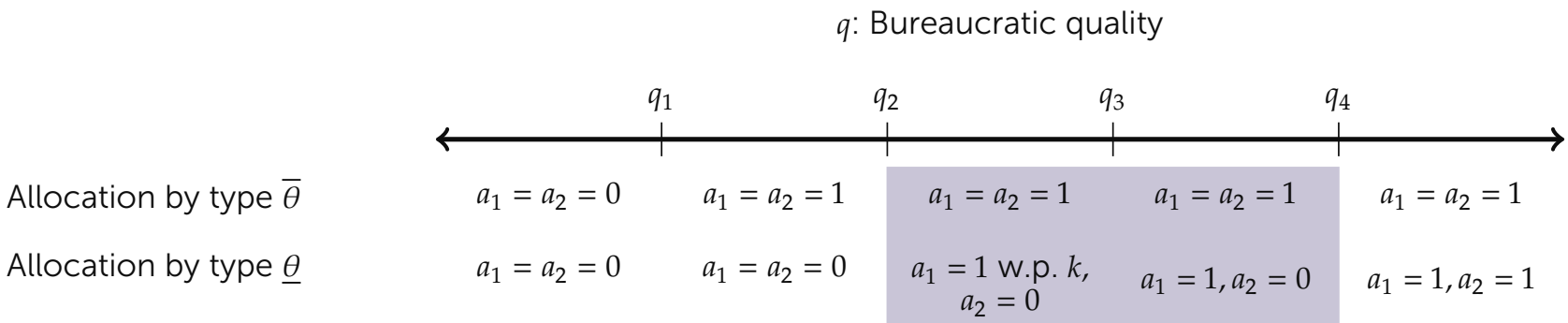
Rents are relatively circumscribed.

Test #2: Term effects on allocations

Prediction: Term effects (difference between second and first terms) are attenuated to zero at high levels of bureaucratic quality.

Purpose: Separate general model from pure selection case without bureaucrat and uninformed voter case:

- Model without bureaucrat → ↓ rents in second term than first.
- Fully uninformed voters → no difference in rents from first to second term.



Test #2: Term effects on allocation

Prediction: Marginal effect of second term on rents is non-zero at low levels of bureaucratic quality (within sample).

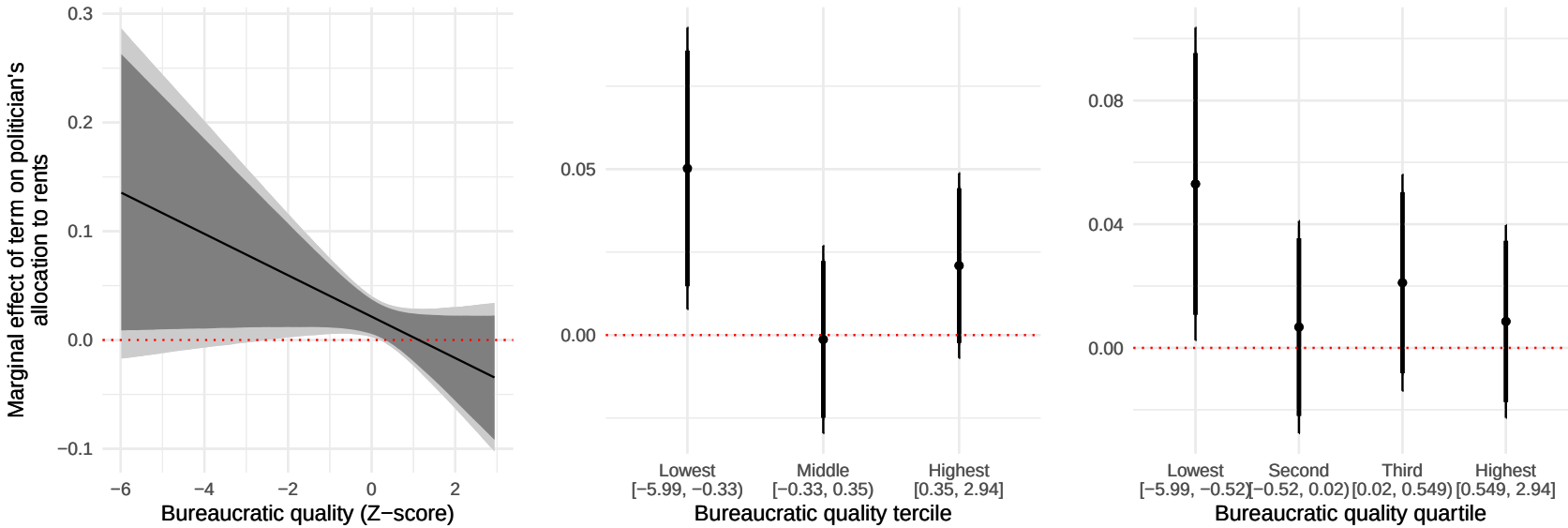
- Estimation equation:

$$Y_{msl} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Q_m + \beta_2 \text{Second term}_m + \beta_3 Q_m \text{Second term}_m + \gamma_s + \lambda_l + \delta \mathbf{X}_m + \epsilon_{msl}$$

- Prediction: $\beta_2 + \beta_3 > 0$ for low levels of Q_m and $\beta_3 < 0$.
- Brazilian mayors are term-limited to two (consecutive) terms.
- Second term$_m$ is an indicator for a mayor's final term in office.

Result #2:

Second term shirking is only detected at low levels of BQ.



Marginal effect of second term on politician's allocation to rents at different levels of BQ.

Mechanisms

Implications of Result #2:

First-term incompetent politicians reduce allocation to rents to win re-election → voters are watching

- ...but only at low levels of BQ → evidence of **pooling equilibrium** at high BQ

Inconsistent with a "bureaucrats in charge" alternative explanation for previous association between BQ and rents (at least in isolation).

Mechanisms

Prediction #3:

At high levels of q, V's posterior (μ) is equal to her prior (π) upon receiving a signal that P allocated no funds to rents.

- Here, the signal is **politician allocation behavior**, not public goods provision → extension with observable allocations.

Purpose: Separate general model from pure selection model (without bureaucrat).

- In model without the bureaucrat **separating equilibrium** emerges at all levels of bureaucratic quality.
- As such, we would expect voters to update on a clean signal everywhere (assuming $\pi \in (0,1)$).

Signal content

Test #3:

CATEs of the clean audit treatment at different levels of bureaucratic quality.

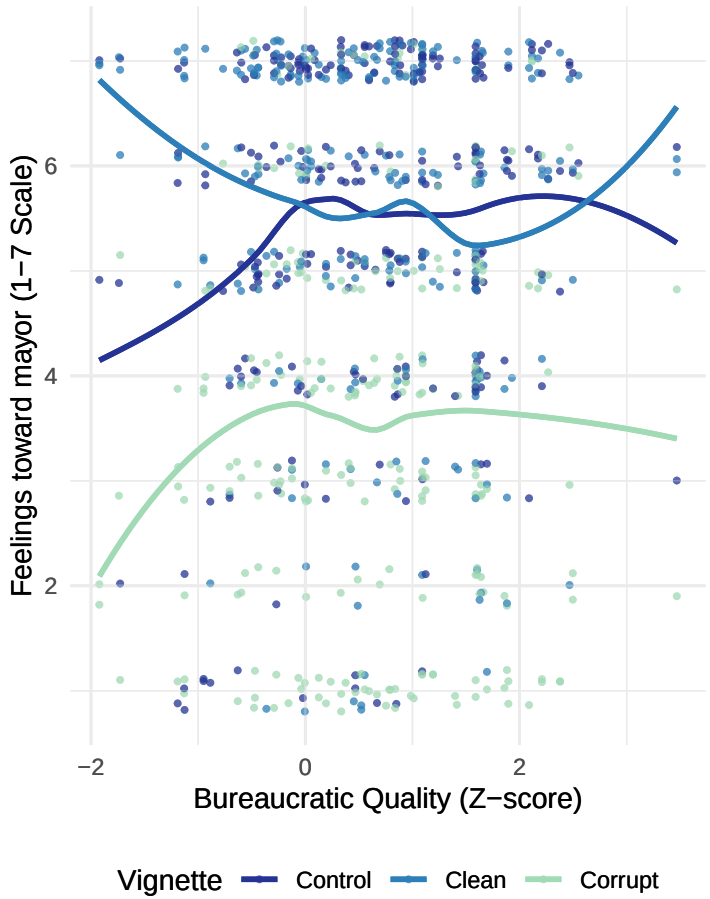
- Estimation equation:

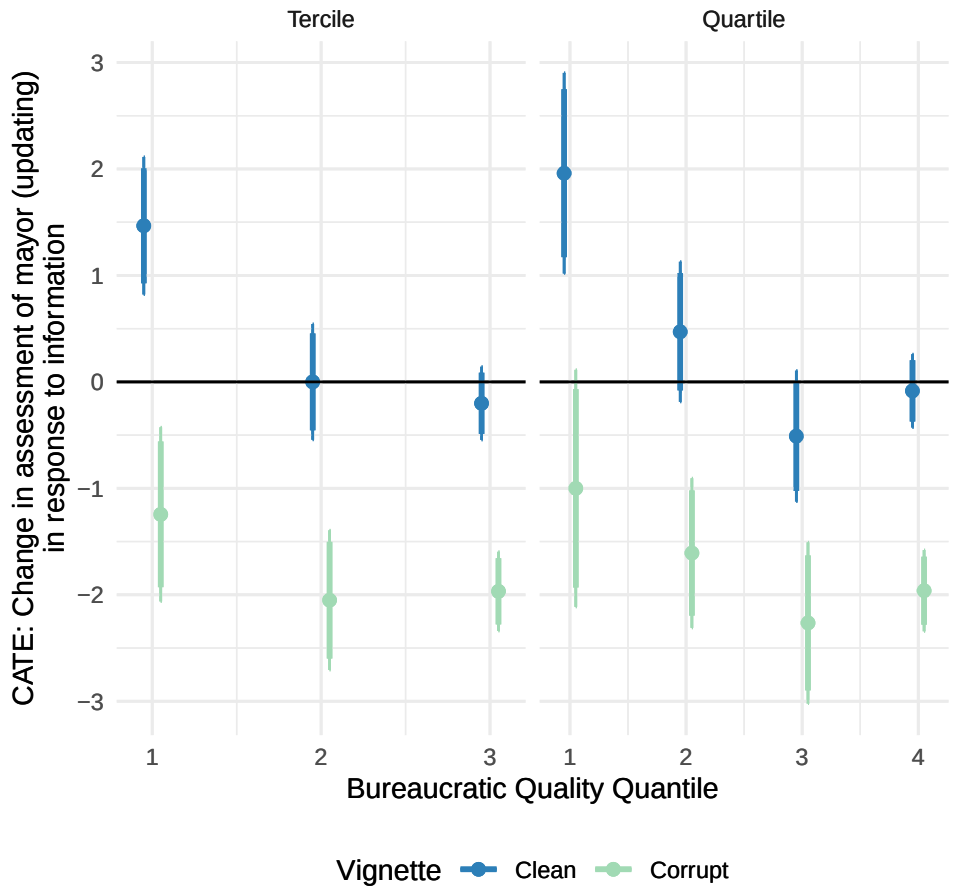
$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ims} = &\beta_0 + \beta_1 + \beta_2 \text{Clean signal}_i + \beta_3 \text{Clean signal}_i Q_m + \\ &\beta_4 \text{Corrupt signal}_i + \beta_5 \text{Corrupt signal}_i Q_m + \gamma_s + \theta X_m + \epsilon_{ims} \end{aligned}$$

- Outcome is 7-point feeling thermometer towards mayor.
- Predictions: $\beta_3 < 0$ and $\beta_2 + \beta_3 = 0$ at high levels of BQ.
- Use of corrupt signal allows for "testing" off-path assumptions.

Result #3:

Updating on clean signal attenuated to 0 as BQ increases → evidence that voters update consistently with general model predictions.





Prediction #4:

Prediction: Incumbency disadvantage emerges at low levels of BQ (in sample).

Purpose: Show that voters' retention decisions anticipate second-term shirking where it is most likely to emerge.

- Under both special cases, recall that model does not predict second-term shirking.

q: Bureaucratic quality

Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1$ w.p. k, $a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = 1, a_2 = 1$

Versus case with uninformed voters:

q: Bureaucratic quality

Allocation by type $\overline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$
Allocation by type $\underline{\theta}$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 0$	$a_1 = a_2 = 1$

Test #4:

Test: Conditional LATES on re-election in Brazilian municipalities in a close elections RDD Klasnja and Titiunik (2017).

- For each quantile bin, b, estimand is:

$$\tau_b = E[Y_i(1) - Y_i(0)|X = c, B_i = b] = \lim_{x \downarrow c} E[Y_i|B_i = b] - \lim_{x \uparrow c}[Y_i|B_i = b]$$

- Estimator: Calonico et al. (2017) estimator, fit separately on each bin with optimal bandwidth from pooled sample.
- Prediction: $\tau_1 < 0$, $\tau_1 < \tau_2, \tau_3$ etc.

Issue: Whether a party wins re-election depends on:

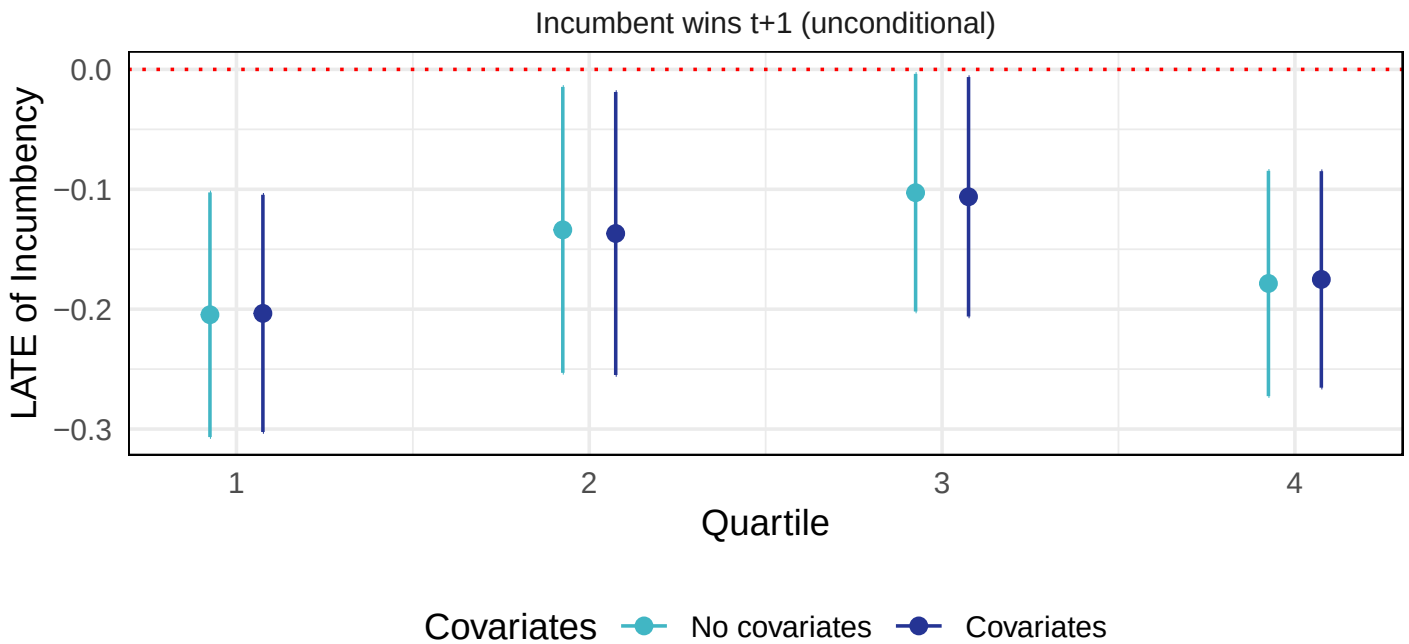
- Parties' decisions to contest next election.
- Voters' behavior.

Tradeoff between identification, interpretation guides results presented.

Result #4a:

Greatest incumbency disadvantage point estimate in lowest quartile of bureaucratic quality, but…

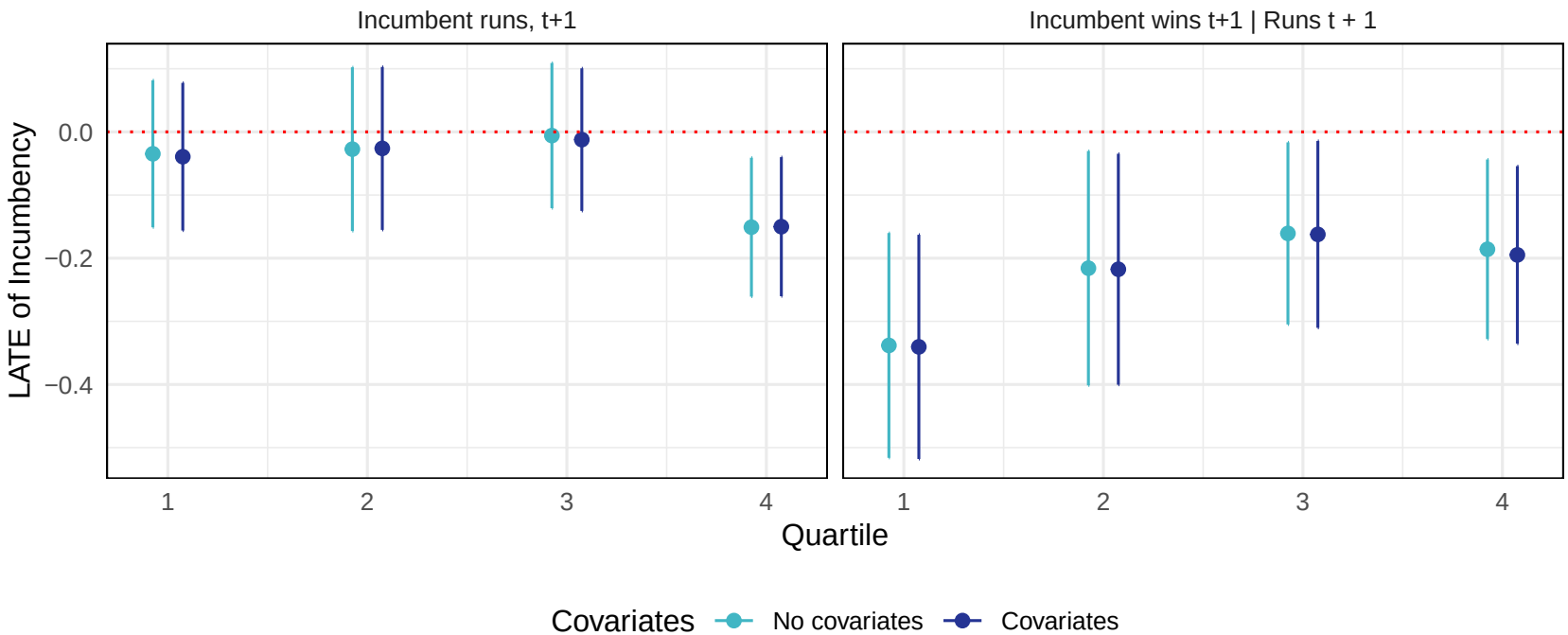
- Results are ambiguous.
- Cannot attribute this as an outcome of **voter** behavior (yet).



Result #4b:

Conditional on incumbent running, incumbency disadvantage is largest at when bureaucratic quality is low.

- Consistent with (some degree) of accurate voter anticipation of shirking.
- ... but prevalence of incumbency disadvantage at higher levels of bureaucratic quality inconsistent with general model (and alternatives).



Discussion

Implications

1. Observable implications of functioning accountability relations look different in different places.
    - Critical observation: stems from **co-production** of public goods by politicians and bureaucrats.

2. Bad outcomes need not be generated by "bad politics".

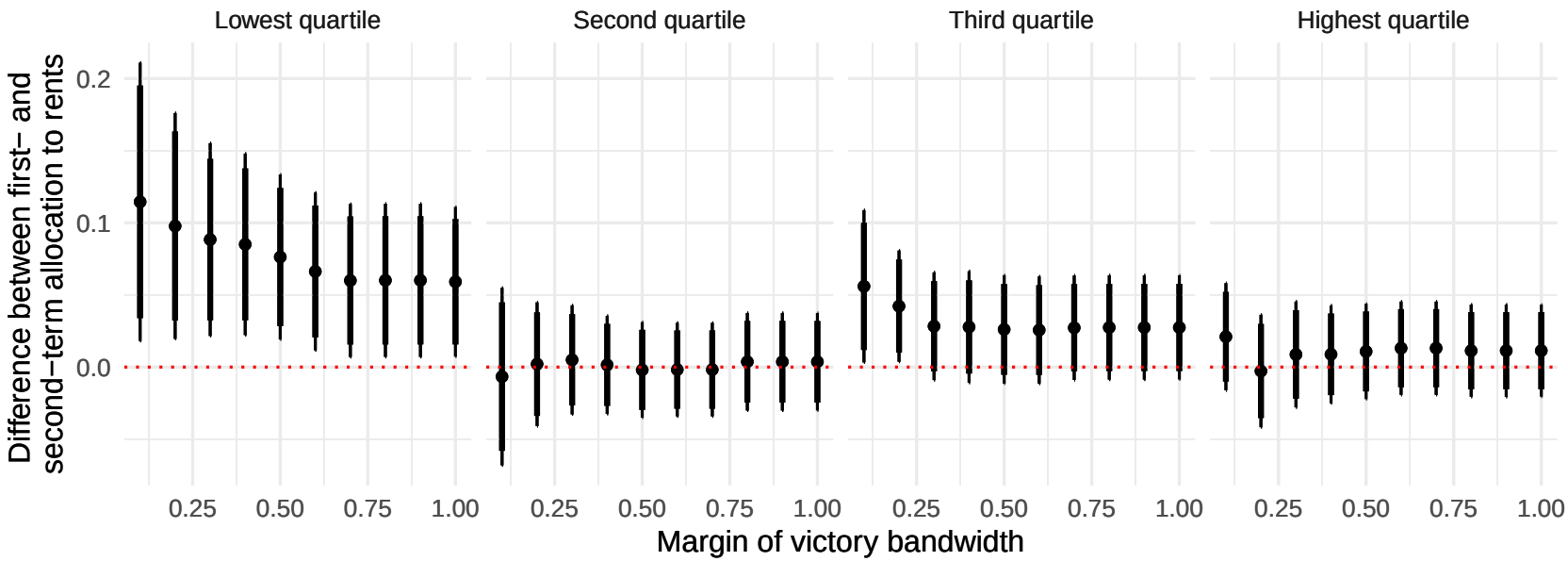
3. Over-emphasis on similarities rather than differences in the (current) study of comparative politics

Thank you!

www.taraslough.com

Second-term effect: mechanisms

- Two mechanisms driving term effects:
  - **Positive selection** of second-period politicians → ↓ term difference (2nd-1st)
  - **Shirking** of low types → ↑ term difference (2nd-1st)
- RD-like exercise (with zero-degree polynomial) allows us to vary **composition** of second-period politicians (under model assumptions)



Term effects at varying bandwidths.

Vignettes

Arm	Vignette Text
Control	"Imagine that you live in a neighborhood similar to your own but in a different city in Brazil. Let's call the mayor of that hypothetical city in which you live Carlos. Imagine that Mayor Carlos is running for reelection. During the four years that he has been mayor, the municipality has experienced a number of improvements, including good economic growth and better health services and transportation." (Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2016, p. 266).
Clean	Control text + "Also, it is well known in the city that Mayor Carlos has not accepted any bribes when awarding city contracts."
Corrupt	Control text + "Also, it is well known in the city that Mayor Carlos has accepted bribes when awarding city contracts."

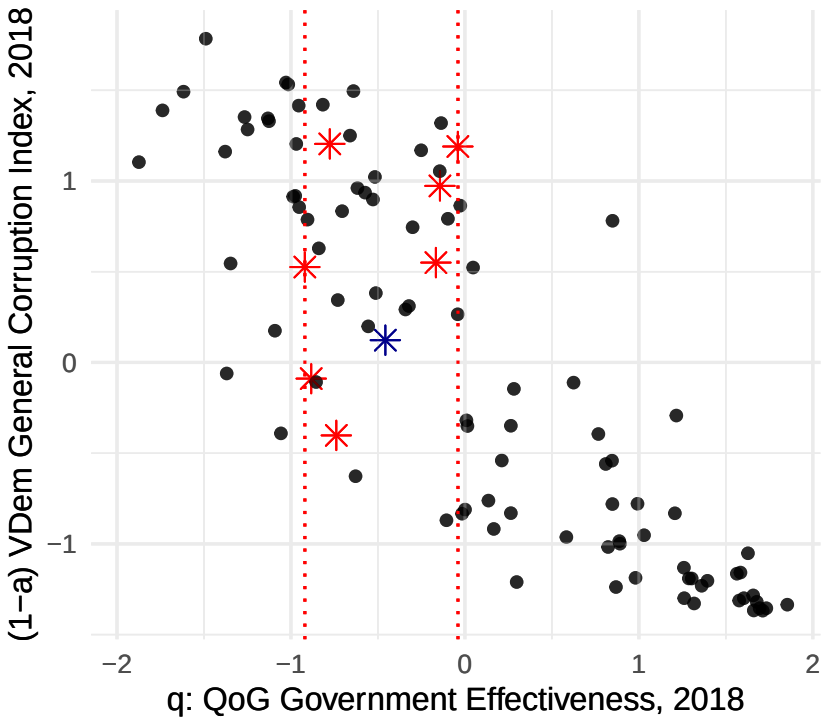
Vignette text for each treatment condition.

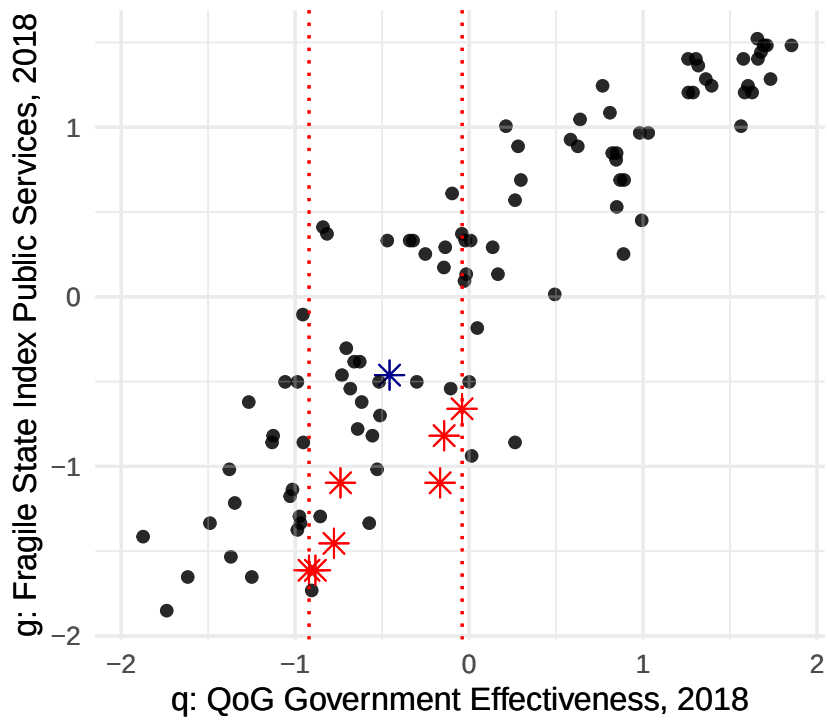
Study #2: Information Experiments

Where do we study information and accountability?

Studies of information and accountability concentrated in:

- Democracies with low-ish levels of bureaucratic quality, high-ish corruption, and low-ish public goods provision





Stars indicate countries with accountability experiments. All variables are standardized.

Cumulated Evidence

Recent null meta-analytic findings from field experiments on information and accountability Dunning et al. (2019), Incerti (2019)

Meta-analyses estimate some weighted average of individual study estimates:

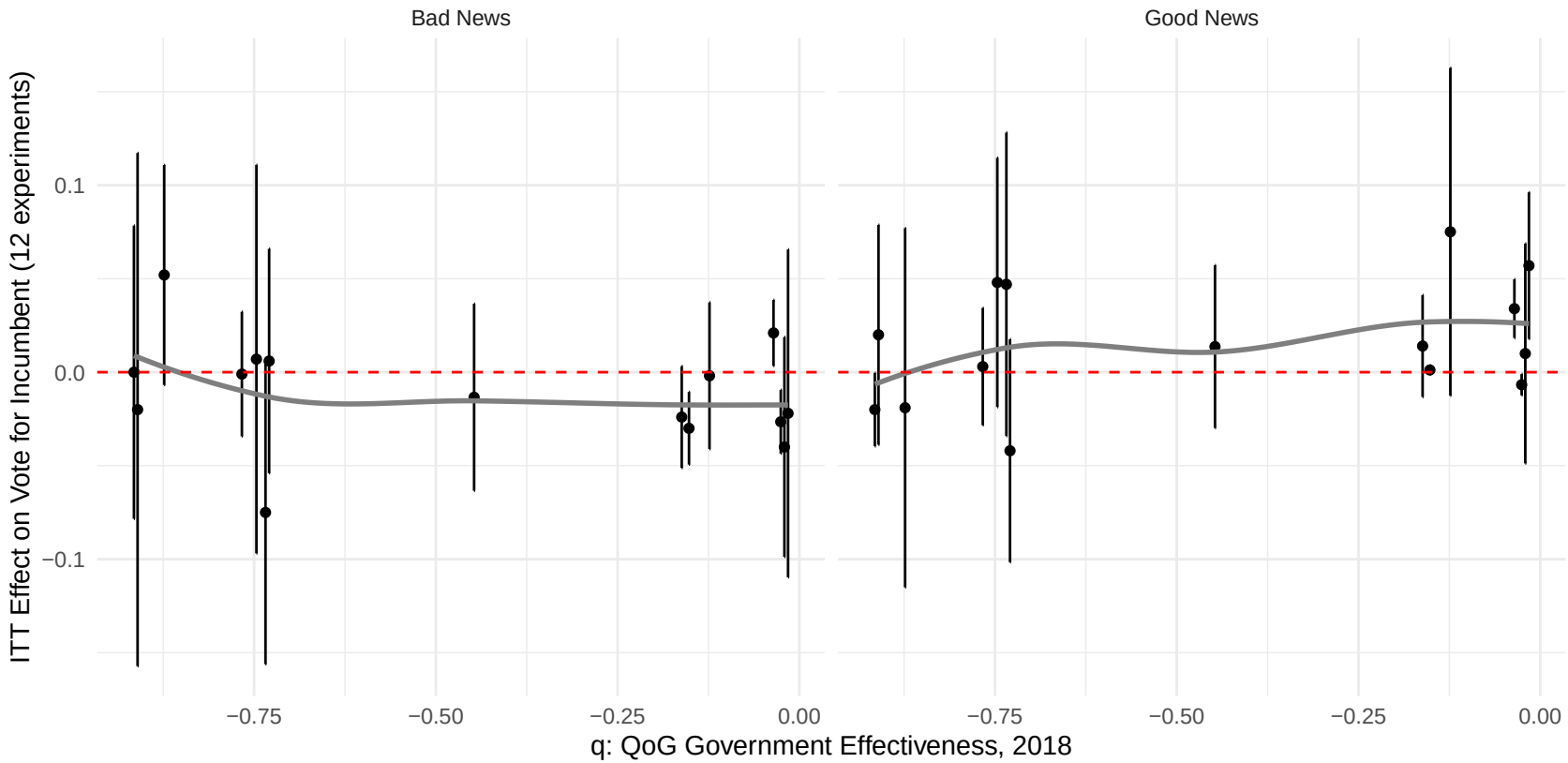
- ... but under this model, the "pooling" of study estimates should attenuate meta-estimates toward 0, even if voters are learning!

Absent better measures of sub-national bureaucratic capacity, we are left with 8 country-level measures.

- Examine 12 experiments, approximating 8 "clusters"

Suggestive evidence

Suggestive evidence of larger effects of information at higher levels of q (in sample).



labelformat=empty

ITT estimates of “good” or “bad” news as a function of QoG measure of bureaucratic quality.

Limitations

1. Better measurement of subnational bureaucratic quality important for developing further tests of the argument.

2. Selection (into study) on equilibrium outcomes potentially limits learning from partial equilibrium tests.
    - Hard to know where we are in the parameter space, various observational equivalencies.

3. Role of theory in definition of external validity. Slough and Tyson (2022a, b)