

Lacking Information or Condoning Corruption

When Do Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?

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In recent decades, enumerating the ill consequences of corruption has become something of a cottage industry in both academic and policy circles.¹ In cross-national studies, corruption is often linked to lower investment and economic growth.² Corruption has also been associated with increased poverty and income inequality.³ Furthermore, in a democracy, corruption undermines the quality of representation when elected politicians make decisions motivated by the desire for personal enrichment rather than by the preferences of voters.⁴ This decreased accountability may pose a real threat to regime support and stability in young democracies.⁵

Assuming that citizens disapprove of corruption, and given that, by definition, democracies provide citizens with the right to choose their leaders, those regimes where citizens have the most power to select their leaders should be expected to suffer from the least corruption. The evidence, however, is mixed. Various cross-national analyses find no conclusive evidence that democracies are less corrupt than nondemocracies, although a long history of democracy is associated with lower corruption.⁶ What explains the apparent inability of democracy to more rapidly decrease corruption, as well as the variation in corruption among democratic countries?

Whereas current explanations of corruption emphasize country-level institutional or economic factors, this article focuses attention on individual citizens. The existence of persistent, pervasive political corruption in a democracy means that many voters cast their ballots for corrupt politicians. We focus on two hypotheses about voter support for corrupt politicians. The first, the information hypothesis, argues that voters support corrupt politicians when they lack information about a candidate's involvement in corruption upon which they could act in the voting booth. The second, the tradeoff hypothesis, argues that voters knowingly cast ballots for corrupt politicians because they expect that the overall benefits from a politician's term in office will be greater than the costs associated with corruption. These hypotheses are tested using data from a nationally representative survey experiment in Brazil.

Brazil is a good test case because of the widespread popular belief that Brazilian voter behavior follows the dynamic specified in the tradeoff hypothesis. The experimental results presented below, however, are sharply at odds with the idea that most Brazilian voters are willing to overlook corruption in exchange for service delivery. On the whole, our respondents do not tolerate corruption and are unlikely to express support for corrupt politicians, even if these politicians otherwise perform well by providing public goods. These results help refine the existing information hypothesis and provide evidence that when given sufficiently specific, credible, and accessible information about corruption, even voters in a country with a history of corruption tolerance express a willingness to reject politicians described as corrupt.

There is an exception to these general findings. Individuals with a high socioeconomic status provide responses that are more consistent with the tradeoff hypothesis. We explore some reasons for the explanatory power of the tradeoff hypothesis among this group and the consequences of this difference for the prospect of controlling political corruption.

Why Do Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?

Scholars propose a number of explanations for variation in corruption across countries. Some attribute levels of corruption to differences in electoral or political institutions, linking federalism and presidentialism to increased corruption and decentralization and plurality elections to lower levels of corruption.⁷ Beyond institutional explanations, some scholars point to inherited or cultural attributes to explain a society's tolerance of corruption.⁸ Others suggest that countries can become stuck in a trap where the pool of available candidates includes only corrupt politicians.⁹

Although much of this literature makes assumptions about voter behavior, few authors explicitly examine the effects of corruption on individual political attitudes and behavior. Our research focuses directly on understanding how individuals process information about corruption when deciding how to cast their votes. Irrespective of institutional structure, corrupt politicians cannot survive electorally without the support of voters. We explore two possible sources of this support: either voters lack information about corrupt behavior and therefore unknowingly support a corrupt politician (the information hypothesis), or they knowingly support a corrupt politician because of his performance in other areas (the tradeoff hypothesis).¹⁰

The Information Hypothesis

There are a number of reasons voters may lack information about political corruption. For obvious reasons, politicians try to conceal their illicit activities. Efforts to obfuscate corruption are likely to be more successful where there is a lack of resources and professionalization among the media, which is an acute problem especially in middle-

low-income democracies.¹¹ Insofar as voters are not aware of corruption, they cannot vote against corrupt candidates.¹² Even when allegations of corruption are made public, voters may discount these reports, especially if they take the form of politically motivated partisan accusations.¹³ If a lack of information explains voter support for corrupt politicians, voters should be expected to withdraw support from corrupt politicians once specific, credible, and accessible information about corruption becomes available.

Much of the cross-country research on the institutional correlates of corruption assumes that the information hypothesis holds true. Margit Tavits expects that voters will “punish a government for any increases in the perceived level of corruption compared to the level of corruption under the previous government.”¹⁴ Daniel Treisman argues that democracies have less corruption because “exposure [is] more likely,” implying that, when exposure occurs, voters will remove corrupt politicians from office.¹⁵ John Gerring and Strom Thacker postulate that increased openness and transparency should be associated with a lower incidence of corruption.¹⁶ Alicia Adserá, Carles Boix, and Mark Payne say that, if voters have mechanisms available to hold politicians accountable, corruption will decrease as information provision increases.

The information hypothesis has received mixed support in a recent wave of natural and field experiments.¹⁷ For example, a field experiment in rural India finds that a publicity campaign on the social costs of corruption has no effect on either voter turnout or the support politicians receive at the polls.¹⁸ Alberto Chong, Ana De La O, Dean Karlan, and Leonard Wantchekon find that in Mexico distributing information about an incumbent’s corrupt behavior in office depresses turnout but, depending on the amount of corruption, has only a small negative effect on the incumbent’s vote share.¹⁹ On the other hand, Claudio Ferraz and Frederico Finan take advantage of a natural experiment in Brazil generated by randomized federal auditing of municipalities, and find that incumbent mayors who engage in multiple acts of corruption lose electoral support when compared to their less corrupt counterparts.²⁰ Miguel de Figueiredo, Daniel Hidalgo, and Yuri Kasahara find that distributing flyers with information about corruption by both candidates in the 2008 São Paulo mayoral race depressed voter support for one candidate but not for the other.²¹

The Tradeoff Hypothesis

Whereas the information hypothesis proposes that voters return corrupt politicians to office because they are unaware of corruption, the tradeoff hypothesis posits that voters knowingly elect corrupt politicians when those politicians provide voters with other benefits. In other words, voters make a strategic decision to overlook corruption because politicians deliver in other ways. The consequences of corruption for political support will thus depend on a politician’s overall performance.

The tradeoff explanation takes different forms. One says that if a politician delivers public works, economic growth, or other public goods, citizens will accept some losses from public coffers. If this is the case, then voters should support corrupt politicians

only where those politicians otherwise act as competent public servants. It is also possible that citizens overlook corruption in exchange for either private goods or ideological satisfaction.²²

We focus our efforts on examining the primary conceptualization of the tradeoff explanation, that citizens overlook corruption when politicians deliver broad public benefits. The contours of a number of presidential corruption scandals in Latin America seem consistent with the logic behind this hypothesis. Consider, for example, the Argentine electorate's disparate reactions to credible accusations of corruption levied against President Carlos Menem during his two terms in office. In 1995, in the context of economic growth and unusually stable prices, public opinion supported a constitutional change that permitted Menem, then in his first term, to run for reelection, and he was returned to office by a large margin. In contrast, by 1999 the economy was in decline, and public opinion turned sharply against Menem's attempt to run for a third term as President. The tradeoff hypothesis might also help explain the disparate fate of two Brazilian presidents who faced allegations of corruption and influence-peddling among their closest collaborators. Fernando Collor de Melo's presidency (1990–1992) included a failed attempt at economic stabilization and limited success in controlling inflation. After corruption allegations came to light, he faced public protests and ultimately impeachment, which led him to tender his resignation. In contrast, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010) presided over a period of substantial economic growth and the expansion of a popular anti-poverty program. In spite of a series of corruption scandals that touched his closest advisers, Lula was elected to a second term in office and enjoyed high levels of public support.

In addition to these anecdotal examples, researchers find support for the tradeoff hypothesis in several contexts. In an experimental setting, Barry Rundquist, Gerald Strom, and John Peters find that voters react less negatively to corruption charges when those charges are levied against a politician with a congruent policy position on an issue important to the voter. From data on U.S. House of Representatives races between 1968 and 1978, John Peters and Susan Welch find that “some [corruption] charges appear to have almost no electoral retribution, while others are punished quite severely.”²³ In north India, ethnic voting results in the election of more corrupt politicians.²⁴ In Argentina, the negative effect of corruption on regime support is mitigated for voters who support the incumbent regime, and citizens with a positive impression of economic performance have less intense reactions to corruption.²⁵

Attitudes toward Corruption in Brazil

Brazil historically has suffered from high levels of corruption, a phenomenon that has persisted in spite of the advent and consolidation of democracy since the mid-1980s.²⁶ Indeed, Kurt Weyland argues that corruption reached record highs in Brazil after the transition to democracy.²⁷ Although corruption scandals involving politicians are common, instances of punishment have remained relatively rare.²⁸ In the words of

three scholars of Brazilian politics, “[t]he conventional understanding of corruption in Brazil suggests ‘impunity reigns.’”²⁹

Conventional wisdom also suggests that Brazilians are especially willing to overlook corruption when politicians otherwise perform well. In fact, a well-known Portuguese phrase succinctly summarizes the tradeoff hypothesis: “*rouba, mas faz*” (“He robs, but he gets things done”). This phrase has sufficient resonance that, according to an urban legend, a well-known congressman and former mayor of the city of São Paulo, Paulo Maluf, took maluf@masfaz.com as his e-mail address.³⁰ While mayor, Maluf oversaw the construction of massive public works projects, many of which were mired in allegations of corruption. As discussed above, the experience of President Lula has also been interpreted as lending support to the tradeoff hypothesis. In spite of a series of influence peddling and kickback scandals, Lula was elected to a second term in office and retained unusually high levels of public approval.³¹

A number of Brazilian public opinion surveys ask explicitly about the tradeoff between corruption and other dimensions of performance. A substantial proportion of Brazilian voters say that they are willing to make this tradeoff. In a survey from 2000, 47 percent of respondents said they would prefer a mayor who was “not totally honest” as long as he “resolved the municipality’s problems.”³² In surveys carried out in 2002 and 2007, 40 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that “a politician who carries out a lot of public works, even if he robs a little, is better than a politician who carries out few public works and does not rob at all.”³³

Despite this reputation for corruption tolerance, recent aggregate-level analyses suggest that Brazilian voters do punish corruption when they learn about it. The information hypothesis finds support at the municipal level in studies showing that, at least under some conditions, voters will turn mayors out of office when audits undertaken by the national or state government uncover corruption linked to the municipal administrations.³⁴ National deputies accused of corrupt acts are less likely to run for reelection and less likely to win reelection if they do run.³⁵ As described above, a field experiment conducted in São Paulo that gave voters information about corruption allegations provided evidence that voters will vote against at least some corrupt politicians.³⁶ The results in this article are broadly consistent with these recent studies, with strong evidence that, once given information about corrupt behavior, Brazilian voters turn against politicians who engage in the practice. The data thus provide individual-level evidence that validates aggregate-level results.³⁷ At the same time, some differences exist in the effect of information about corruption across social groups that have not been previously noted.

An Embedded Survey Experiment

When asked about a sensitive topic in a public opinion poll, respondents may provide socially conforming answers rather than their genuine opinions.³⁸ In our survey

experiment, rather than directly asking respondents their views on the tradeoff between corruption and competence, we randomly assigned each respondent to hear one of twelve different vignettes, varying the information that the respondent received about a hypothetical incumbent politician's past corruption and general performance in providing public works.³⁹ We also varied information about the politician's political party. Random assignment to the vignettes ensures that, on average, groups of respondents are indistinguishable on both observable and unobservable characteristics.⁴⁰ The experimental set-up also has the advantage of allowing us to manipulate information not easily manipulated in the real world. Comparing average responses to standard survey questions across the groups assigned to the different vignettes enables identification of the causal effect of receiving information about corruption and competence on survey responses.⁴¹

The basic vignette read as follows (with the phrases in brackets being substituted in alternative versions of the vignette):

Imagine a person named Gabriel (or Gabriela), who is a person like you, living in a neighborhood like yours, but in a different city in Brazil. The mayor of Gabriel's city is running for reelection in October. He is a member of the PT [*Partido dos Trabalhadores*] (or PSDB [*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*]). In Gabriel's city, it is well known that the mayor never takes bribes (or frequently takes bribes) when giving out government contracts. The mayor has completed few (or many; or omit the entire sentence) public works projects during his term in office. In this city, the election for mayor is expected to be very close.

Information about the mayor's partisanship, his history of taking bribes, and his performance in providing public works (or if this information was not provided to the respondent) were all randomized across respondents.⁴² The name of the hypothetical voter (Gabriel or Gabriela) was chosen by the enumerator to match the respondent's gender.

By putting respondents in the shoes of an anonymous Gabriel(a), we aimed to increase their willingness to respond honestly to corruption information. At the same time, by establishing that Gabriel(a) is "a person like you, living in a neighborhood like yours," we aimed to capture reactions that reflected the respondent's own attitudes.⁴³ Respondents were asked to think of a voter in a different but similar city in order to allow them to abstract from the specific elected officials in their own municipalities.

Immediately following the vignette, respondents were asked a referendum-style question, "In your opinion, what is the likelihood that Gabriel(a) will vote for this mayor in the next election: very likely, somewhat likely, unlikely, not at all likely?" The response to this question serves as the main outcome variable.⁴⁴ For all analyses in this article, we collapse it to a dichotomous variable indicating positive or negative vote intention.⁴⁵

The survey was administered in Summer 2010 by IBOPE, the largest public opinion polling company in Brazil, as part of their nationwide monthly omnibus survey (N=2,002).⁴⁶ The questions were the first block on the survey; respondents heard the

vignette immediately after answering a small set of demographic questions that determined their eligibility for the survey.

Table 1 presents the six main treatment conditions, and the variable in each cell represents the proportion of respondents in that treatment condition who say that Gabriel(a) is either very likely or somewhat likely to vote for the mayor. Variation in the announced party of the incumbent is ignored for the analysis presented here, because copartisanship status has little or no effect on the results.⁴⁷

Table 1 Six Treatment Categories

	High Competence	Low Competence	No Information on Competence
No Corruption	B ₁ (N=334)	B ₂ (N=335)	B ₃ (N=333)
Corruption	B ₄ (N=335)	B ₅ (N=334)	B ₆ (N=331)

Note: The variables in the cells note the proportion of respondents in the treatment category who express their belief that Gabriel(a) will vote for the incumbent politician. The treatments also varied in a third dimension not shown here—the announced party of the incumbent mayor—with roughly equal numbers of respondents assigned to hear about the PT (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, Workers Party) and the PSDB (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*, Brazilian Social Democratic Party) in each of the six cells shown.

To the extent the information hypothesis is correct and voters react negatively when they discover that a politician is corrupt, respondents in the corruption treatment conditions can be expected to express lower levels of support for the mayor than those in the no corruption treatment conditions ($B_4 < B_1$; $B_5 < B_2$; and $B_6 < B_3$). To the extent the tradeoff hypothesis is correct and voters are willing to forgive corruption in the face of competence or good performance, several patterns should emerge in the data. First, punishment of corruption should decrease as competence increases [$(B_4 - B_1) < (B_5 - B_2)$]. Second, competent but corrupt politicians should be weakly preferred to incompetent but clean politicians ($B_4 \geq B_2$). Note that these two hypotheses are not exclusive. It is possible to find evidence for both the information hypothesis and the tradeoff hypothesis in the data.

Are Voters More Tolerant of Corruption When Politicians Provide Public Goods?

The main results provide substantial support for the information hypothesis and no support for the tradeoff hypothesis. Table 2 displays the proportion of people in each treatment category who say Gabriel(a) would vote for the incumbent mayor. The first column shows that, across all respondents, there is a very strong negative reaction to corrupt behavior. The share of respondents willing to vote for a candidate described as noncorrupt is 78 percent, but only 19 percent are willing to vote for a candidate described as corrupt, a difference of almost 60 percentage points. This is individual-level

evidence of strong aversion to corruption on the part of voters, and clear support for the information hypothesis. Even in the subset of respondents who were told that the mayor had delivered a large number of public goods during his term in office, there is a similarly sized anticorruption effect. While the tradeoff hypothesis suggests that competence can moderate the punishment for corruption, there is no evidence of this here.

Table 2 Respondents' Assessments of Whether Gabriel(a) Will Vote for Corrupt and Clean Politicians

	(1) All Vignettes	(2) Competent Vignettes	(3) Incompetent Vignettes	(4) Vignettes without Competence Information
Not Corrupt	0.78 (0.01) N=989	0.88 (0.02) N=329	0.62 (0.03) N=331	0.83 (0.02) N=329
Corrupt	0.19 (0.01) N=985	0.28 (0.02) N=328	0.13 (0.02) N=328	0.16 (0.02) N=329
Difference	0.58 (0.02)	0.59 (0.03)	0.49 (0.03)	0.66 (0.03)
p-value on H ₀ : No Difference	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note: Cells report proportion of respondents in each treatment condition who said that Gabriel(a) would be willing to vote for the incumbent mayor.

In addition, the tradeoff hypothesis is not supported in the comparison between responses to a corrupt but competent politician and responses to a clean but incompetent politician. Among those respondents who were told the mayor was clean but incompetent, fully 62 percent reported that Gabriel(a) would support the mayor. In contrast, only 28 percent of respondents in the corrupt but competent treatment group believed Gabriel(a) would support the mayor. This 34-point difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Additional disconfirming evidence exists for the tradeoff hypothesis among the subset of respondents who received no information about performance. When told that the politician was corrupt, but given no information about competence, responses about Gabriel(a)'s voting intentions parallel those of respondents in the corrupt and incompetent category. In contrast, responses from subjects who were told that the politician was clean but were given no information about competence parallel those of respondents in the clean and competent category. This suggests that respondents view corruption and public goods provision as negatively correlated, which is inconsistent with the tradeoff hypothesis.

A Tradeoff Mentality for Some?

Although there is little evidence that the average Brazilian citizen is willing to forgive corruption, even when politicians deliver public works, the literature suggests that the tradeoff hypothesis may have greater relevance for particular subsets of the population. Some authors argue that the poor, because of the pressures of meeting basic needs, are less likely to have the time or inclination to care about the quality of governance.⁴⁸ Figueiredo finds significant class differences in the responses to a direct survey question about support for a corrupt yet high-performing mayor in Brazil.⁴⁹ Among respondents in the two lowest income brackets, 54 percent claim to prefer a corrupt but competent mayor to a clean but inefficient one, whereas willingness to support such a mayor drops to 40 percent and 32 percent, respectively, among the top two income brackets. Carlos Pereira, Lucio Rennó, and David Samuels similarly report an inverse relationship between socioeconomic states and support for corrupt politicians who otherwise perform well.⁵⁰ Surprisingly, in our data, the highest levels of support for the tradeoff hypothesis are found among the wealthiest respondents. This runs contrary to existing findings from Brazil that rely on nonexperimental survey instruments.

Does Socioeconomic Status Matter for Attitudes toward Corruption?

The relationship between socioeconomic status and information about corruption is examined here by comparing the effects of the prompts across social classes, using a standard Brazilian measure of social class.⁵¹ Table 3 summarizes the results for respondents in the lowest and highest social classes.⁵²

As Table 3 shows, respondents in the lowest classes have a powerful negative reaction to information about corruption. For either level of purported competence, information about corruption results in a sharp drop off in support. In addition, there is no evidence of widespread support for the tradeoff hypothesis among poor respondents. Fully 65 percent of these respondents replied that Gabriel(a), a person like themselves, would vote for the clean, incompetent mayor, whereas only 32 percent replied that she would vote for the corrupt yet competent mayor.

Among the upper class, the information hypothesis also appears to have significant explanatory power. For a given level of performance, mayors who are revealed to be corrupt receive far less support than those purported to be clean. More striking, however, is that, in contrast to the lower class group, the tradeoff hypothesis finds much more support among the upper class. The proportion of upper class respondents who say that Gabriel(a) will vote for a corrupt but competent politician (0.48) is statistically indistinguishable from the proportion who say that Gabriel(a) will vote for a clean but incompetent politician (0.54). In addition, although upper class voters clearly punish corruption, they withdraw support from corrupt politicians to a lesser degree than respondents from other social classes.

Table 3 Variation in Voting Patterns Across Social Class

	Lowest classes (D,E)		Highest classes (A1,A2,B1)	
	Competent Vignettes	Incompetent Vignettes	Competent Vignettes	Incompetent Vignettes
Not Corrupt	0.88 (0.04) N=81	0.65 (0.05) N=87	1.00 (0.00) N=22	0.54 (0.03) N=35
Corrupt	0.32 (0.05) N=87	0.13 (0.04) N=81	0.48 (0.03) N=23	0.23 (0.08) N=30
“ <i>Rouba Mas Faz</i> ” Difference	0.33 (0.07)		0.06 (0.14)	
p-value on H ₀ : No Difference	0.00		0.64	

Note: Cells report proportion of respondents in each treatment condition who said that Gabriel(a) would be willing to vote for the incumbent mayor.

What explains the greater tolerance for corruption among the upper class? There is some evidence cross nationally that corruption imposes less of a financial burden on the wealthy. In Peru, for example, the poor pay a larger share of their income in bribes than the rich when trying to access public services.⁵³ A field experiment in Mexico reveals that the traffic police are much more likely to extract bribes from drivers who appear to be poor than from drivers who appear to be rich.⁵⁴ AmericasBarometer 2010 data from Brazil show that the poor are more likely than the rich or middle class to have been asked for a bribe in the previous twelve months.

Separately, wealthy voters might be more likely to personally know or identify with politicians or even to be the direct beneficiaries of corrupt transactions. This could increase corruption tolerance among this group. Data from Peru and Uganda suggest that wealthy citizens engage in bribery of bureaucratic officials more frequently than the poor.⁵⁵ Insofar as wealthy bribe payers see bribery as a way of getting things done, they might be less likely to condemn a politician for being corrupt.

Another possibility is that, due either to personal experience or to political sophistication, wealthy voters are more attuned to the difficulties of municipal governance and therefore value more highly a politician who delivers public goods. In Robert Luskin’s classic study of political sophistication, for instance, he finds that white collar workers are much more likely to be politically sophisticated than blue-collar workers and that occupation status matters more to them than education or exposure to political information.⁵⁶ Our survey did not include questions about political sophistication.⁵⁷

A fourth possibility is that the rich, asked to think about Gabriel(a)’s decision, do not give their own opinions but answer based on what they assume are the attitudes of an “average” Brazilian. If this is the case, given the widespread popular belief that

Brazilians are willing to overlook corruption, wealthy respondents might say that Gabriel(a) would tolerate corruption, even if the respondent does not share this view. However, responses among the wealthy differ from those of respondents at large for many of the treatment categories, most of which do not correspond to widely held beliefs about Brazilian popular attitudes. Wealthy respondents are, for example, somewhat more critical than other respondents of clean but incompetent mayors and exceptionally enthusiastic about clean and competent mayors. In addition, responses to other questions in the survey provide evidence against the idea that the wealthy project the attitudes of the poor and middle class onto their survey responses. Upper class respondents are more likely than other respondents to think that a politician is skilled in other areas when given the corrupt but competent treatment: 39 percent of poor respondents thought that a corrupt but competent mayor would be effective at getting federal funds, compared to 57 percent of wealthy respondents. All of this strongly suggests that, rather than attributing a tradeoff mindset to Gabriel(a), these respondents in fact evaluate mayoral performance differently from most other respondents.⁵⁸

With regard to the sharp contrast between our results and those of previous surveys that asked directly about the tradeoff between corruption and competence, we can only speculate. It is notable, however, that the most privileged respondents are more likely to be attuned to international norms about corruption and therefore more subject to social desirability bias in the context of direct questioning. It may be that our experimental setting, which diminishes incentives to hide socially undesirable views, is most useful for uncovering the true opinions of this group. This is also supported by rates of non-response reported in previous survey work. In the survey analyzed by Figueiredo, the number of “other” or “no responses” to a direct question on the tradeoff between corruption and performance steadily increases with income: 22 percent of the highest income respondents failed to choose one of the two proffered options, as compared to only 9 percent of low income respondents.⁵⁹ Evidence exists from American politics that survey respondents who hold socially unacceptable opinions are more likely to fail to answer or to opt not to give an opinion to sensitive questions.⁶⁰

Rethinking the Information Hypothesis

Although the phrase “rouba, mas faz” enjoys widespread recognition in Brazil, the results of the nationwide survey experiment offer little evidence that Brazilian voters embrace this tradeoff mentality. Voters surveyed are very sensitive to information about corruption; the majority are willing to overlook poor public goods provision as long as a politician is described as not taking bribes. Overall, the results are much more consistent with the information hypothesis claim that citizens will vote against corrupt politicians when they learn about corruption. Although these results are at odds with the tradeoff hypothesis and popular perceptions of corruption tolerance in

Brazil, they are consistent with recent aggregate-level empirical work in Brazil that uses election outcomes to examine the effect of information about corruption on reelection.⁶¹ Our results provide individual-level underpinnings for these macro-level studies.⁶² With respect to social class, the findings upend the conventional and scholarly wisdom on the topic, both in Brazil and elsewhere. The richest respondents are the most tolerant of corruption. This may be due to the differential effects of corruption across class or to the fact that the wealthy interpret information about corruption and performance differently from their poorer compatriots.

In sum, the results suggest that persistent corruption in Brazil is due to a lack of information. But can this really be the case? Although there are limitations to Brazil's media, they have been instrumental in publicizing a number of major corruption scandals in recent years.⁶³ In the 2006 Brazilian National Election Study, over 40 percent of respondents named corruption as the single biggest political problem in the country.⁶⁴ Data from our survey show that Brazilians have no illusions about the cleanliness of their politicians. When asked how common it is for Brazilian politicians to take bribes, 78 percent of respondents say it is very or somewhat common.

Brazilian voters do not necessarily link this belief in widespread corruption to their personal experiences, however. As shown in Table 4, when respondents were asked if they had ever personally voted for a corrupt politician, only 21 percent say that they had.⁶⁵ Even among those who say it is very common for politicians to take bribes, fully 73 percent say they personally have never voted for a corrupt politician.⁶⁶ Much like the familiar observation that the average American hates congress but loves her congressperson, Brazilian voters appear to think that corruption is everywhere, and yet they report at high rates that they themselves have never voted for a corrupt politician.

Table 4 Perceptions of Actual Corruption

How Common Is It For Politicians to Take Bribes?	Have Not Voted for a Corrupt Politician	Have Voted for a Corrupt Politician	Total
Very Common	601	217	818 (45 percent)
Somewhat Common	488	117	605 (33 percent)
Not Very Common	232	41	273 (15 percent)
Not At All	129	13	142 (8 percent)
Total	1,450 (79 percent)	388 (21 percent)	1,838

Note: The table reports respondents' beliefs about how common it is for politicians in Brazil to take bribes and also whether or not they personally have voted for a corrupt politician.

As a means of refining the information hypothesis, the results of the experiment can be connected directly to this pattern. Survey prompts like the one we use necessarily confront respondents with direct information that is uncluttered by the distractions of real life.⁶⁷ In this case, the dissimilarities between the experiment and the real world may illuminate the scope conditions for the information hypothesis. The results suggest that even if broad information about corruption does not have electoral consequences, specific, credible, and available information affects citizens' evaluations of politicians and may change voting behavior. The results from experimental work in other settings support this conclusion. In Abhijit Banerjee, Donald Green, Jennifer Green, and Rohini Pande's work on rural India, an experimental stimulus that entailed a broad discussion of the ills of corruption, rather than a specific account of corruption on the part of any particular politician, had no effect on voting outcomes.

The information hypothesis, as usually presented, implies that the mere presence of information about corruption will trigger a voter response. Our survey gives citizens specific information about a particular politician (bribe-taking by a current mayor) from a credible source (the survey was run by IBOPE, the largest and most well-known public opinion firm in Brazil, and there was every indication from piloting and field monitoring that respondents took the vignette seriously) in close temporal proximity to a hypothetical voting decision (immediately after hearing the vignette, respondents were asked what Gabriel(a) would do).

In contrast, the type of information Brazilian voters typically encounter about corruption may be quite different; it may be vague, diffuse in who it accuses of wrongdoing, disseminated by partisan sources, and not accessible in the period immediately before elections. Although Brazil has a large, privately owned, and active media, its penetration is uneven. As Freedom House reports, the challenges to information provision are particularly acute away from the main metropolitan areas.⁶⁸ Ferraz and Finan document that many municipalities do not have even a single radio station.

Therefore, although Brazilian voters believe corruption is prevalent, this appears unlikely to affect voting behavior unless, as in our experimental vignette, voters are given credible, specific, and cognitively available information that ties corruption to a particular politician. Similarly, the results reported by Ferraz and Finan and by Carlos Pereira, Marcus André Melo, and Marcus Figueiredo show that reelection rates were significantly lower in cities where preelection audits found corruption violations. Pereira, Melo, and Figueiredo, in particular, contrast the effects of corruption revelations from two waves of audits, one conducted over a year prior to the election and one conducted within the four-month official campaign period leading up to elections. They find that only the latter had a significant effect on mayoral reelection, suggesting that only when information about corruption is at the top of voters' minds do they act on it. Ferraz and Finan find that where there are more local radio stations, the negative effects of corruption findings are enhanced.

Conclusion

The typical Brazilian citizen is very sensitive to information about corruption and is unlikely to support a corrupt politician, even if this politician delivers public goods. If any group of Brazilians today tolerates corruption among politicians, such sentiment appears to be limited to the wealthiest citizens, and not, as previous work suggests, to the poorest. What do these results tell us about the prospects for limiting corruption in Brazil and elsewhere? In light of the cultural resonance of the phrase “rouba, mas faz,” Brazil appears to pose a hard case for the information hypothesis. Such strong evidence for the information hypothesis and against the tradeoff hypothesis implies that broad cultural explanations of corruption are likely limited in their explanatory power. These results should cheer opponents of corruption, since presumably it is easier to repair an information deficit than to change preference orderings. A number of efforts are currently underway in Brazil to give voters more precise information about candidates’ corrupt activities during the course of the electoral campaign (and to outlaw some corrupt candidates from running for office).⁶⁹

These results sound some cautionary notes, as well. If, as we argue, the distribution of precise, credible information is crucial for generating a voter response, this task is still substantial in many young, lower-, and middle-income democracies. Its success will depend either on independent government agencies or on active investigative journalism and widespread dissemination of information. Precisely where corruption is widespread, obtaining and distributing credible information is difficult. Corrupt politicians may act to prevent the establishment of independent auditing agencies. Journalists and other watchdogs may fear repercussions from politicians and candidates.⁷⁰ Even where corruption is uncovered, the ability to attract and hold the public’s attention may vary with levels of corruption. Where most politicians are clean, identifying the few corrupt politicians may be relatively easy for journalists, and then that information can be readily acted upon by voters. In contrast, if most or many politicians are corrupt, it may be difficult for voters to identify and recall credible, detailed information about corruption. Finally, if the wealthy are more corruption tolerant than the general population, this offers both hope and a challenge. In reversing the conventional understanding of which group is likely to tolerate corruption, there is hope in that the mass public may be more likely than has been previously thought to turn corrupt politicians out of office. On the other hand, insofar as opinion leaders and members of the media represent the viewpoints of the wealthy, citizens may not gain access to the information that they need in order to know who is and is not corrupt.

NOTES

This article is part of an ongoing collaboration in which the position of first author alternates between the authors. Both authors contributed equally to this paper. Previous versions of this article were presented at the 2010 American Political Science Association annual meeting, the 2011 CESS-NYU Experimental Political Science Conference, and the 2011 European Political Science Association annual meeting. For

helpful feedback, we thank Christopher Anderson, Jake Bowers, Thomas Brambor, Damarys Canache, Silvia Cervellini, José Cheibub, Diego Correa, Miguel de Figueiredo, Scott Desposato, Brian Gaines, Daniel Gingerich, Matt Golder, Jim Kuklinski, Eduardo Leoni, Renato Lima de Oliveira, Rose McDermott, Jeff Mondak, David Nickerson, Lucio Rennó, Mitch Seligson, Dan Treisman, Josh Tucker, Milan Vaishnav, Cara Wong, and Cesar Zucco, along with participants at the Faculty-Student Seminar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Thanks to Amanda Cronkhite and Diego Correa for research assistance. Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro thanks the Brown University Salomon Research Award for funding.

1. By corruption, we mean the abuse of public office for private gain. See World Bank, *Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group, 1997). This article focuses on political corruption—the involvement of elected office holders in corrupt acts—as distinguished from bureaucratic corruption, which involves unelected public servants.

2. Paulo Mauro, “Corruption and Growth,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 110 (August 1995), 681–712; Pranab Bardhan, “Corruption and Development: A Review of the Issues,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 35 (September 1997), 1320–46; Daniel Treisman, “The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-National Study,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 76 (June 2000), 399–457; Johann Graf Lambsdorff, “Causes and Consequences of Corruption: What Do We Know from a Cross-Section of Countries?” in Susan Rose-Ackerman, ed., *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2006), 3–51.

3. Hongyi Li, Lixin Colin Xu, and Heng-Fu Zou, “Corruption, Income Distribution and Growth,” *Economics and Politics*, 12 (July 2000), 155–82; Sanjeev Gupta, Hamid Davoodi, and Rosa Alonso-Terme, “Does Corruption Affect Income Inequality and Poverty?” *Economics of Governance*, 3 (March 2002), 23–45; Damarys Canache and Michael E. Allison, “Perceptions of Political Corruption in Latin American Democracies,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, 47 (Fall 2005), 91–111.

4. Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Stephen D. Morris, *Corruption and Politics in Contemporary Mexico* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991); Canache and Allison.

5. Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Mitchell A. Seligson, “The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries,” *Journal of Politics*, 64 (May 2002), 408–33; Christopher J. Anderson and Yuliya V. Tverdova, “Corruption, Political Allegiances and Attitudes Toward Government in Contemporary Democracies,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 47 (January 2003), 91–109; Daniel Gingerich, “Corruption and Political Decay: Evidence from Bolivia,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 4 (March 2009), 1–34.

6. Lambsdorff; Margit Tavits, “Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 51 (January 2007), 218–29; Daniel Treisman, “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10 (June 2007), 211–44; Michael Rock, “Corruption and Democracy,” *Journal of Development Studies*, 45 (January 2009), 55–75.

7. Treisman, “Causes of Corruption”; Raymond Fisman and Roberta Gatti, “Decentralization and Corruption: Evidence across Countries,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 83 (March 2002), 325–45; Alicia Adsera, Carles Boix, and Mark Payne, “Are You Being Served? Political Accountability and the Quality of Government,” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 19 (October 2003), 445–90; Torsten Persson, Guido Tabellini, and Francesco Trebbi, “Electoral Rules and Corruption,” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 1 (June 2003), 958–89; John Gerring and Strom Thacker, “Political Institutions and Corruption: The Role of Unitarism and Parliamentarism,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 34 (April 2004), 295–330; Jana Kunicova and Susan Rose-Ackerman, “Electoral Rules and Constitutional Structures as Constraints on Corruption,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 35 (October 2005), 573–606; Miriam Golden and Eric Chang, “Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 37 (January 2006), 115–37.

8. Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny, “The Quality of Government,” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 15 (March 1999), 222–79; Treisman, “Causes of Corruption”; Raymond J. Fisman and Edward Miguel, “Corruption, Norms, and Legal Enforcement: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 115 (December 2007), 1020–48.

9. Oskar Kurer, “Why Do Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?” in Arvind K. Jain, ed., *The Political Economy of Corruption* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 63–86; Francesco Caselli and Massimo Morelli, “Bad Politicians,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 88 (March 2004), 759–82; Matthias Messner and Matthias Polborn, “Paying Politicians,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 88 (December 2004), 2423–45.

10. A third possibility is that, all else equal, voters actually inherently prefer corrupt politicians. We view this as implausible.

11. Freedom House, Freedom of the Press 2010, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/pfs/371.pdf>, accessed April 27, 2011.

12. Rose-Ackerman; John G. Peters and Susan Welch, "The Effects of Charges of Corruption on Voting Behavior in Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 74 (September 1980), 697–708; Barbara Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

13. Barry S. Rundquist, Gerald S. Strom, and John G. Peters, "Corrupt Politicians and Their Electoral Support: Some Experimental Observations," *American Political Science Review*, 71 (September 1977), 954–63.

14. Tavits, 202.

15. Daniel Treisman, "The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-National Study," University of California, Los Angeles (April 1998), 6, available at http://www.isr.umich.edu/cps/pewpa/archive/archive_98/19980019.pdf, accessed June 12, 2012.

16. John Gerring and Strom Thacker, "Do Neoliberal Policies Deter Political Corruption?" *International Organization*, 59 (January 2005), 233–54.

17. For a summary of many of these works, as well as other experimental work dealing with the effect of voter information on the quality of governance, see Rohini Pande, "Can Informed Voters Enforce Better Governance? Experiments in Low Income Democracies," *Annual Review of Economics*, 3 (September 2011), 215–37; see, also, Matthew S. Winters, Paul Testa, and Mark M. Fredrickson, "Using Field Experiments to Understand Information as an Antidote to Corruption," in Danila Serra and Leonard Wantchekon, eds., *Research in Experimental Economics, Volume 15: New Advances in Experimental Research on Corruption* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2012), 213–36.

18. Abhijit Banerjee, Donald Green, Jennifer Green, and Rohini Pande, "Can Voters be Primed to Choose Better Legislators? Experimental Evidence from Rural India," Working Paper, 2010.

19. Alberto Chong, Ana L. De La O, Dean Karlan, and Leonard Wantchekon, "Looking Beyond the Incumbent: The Effects of Exposing Corruption on Electoral Outcomes," NBER Working Paper 17679, 2011.

20. Claudio Ferraz and Frederico Finan, "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123 (May 2008), 703–45.

21. The authors distributed information about actual corruption allegations against each candidate, which meant that the severity of the accusations varied. More severe accusations against one candidate negatively affected vote share, whereas the less serious allegations made against the other candidate did not affect voter support. Miguel F. de Figueiredo, Daniel Hidalgo, and Yüri Kasahara, "When Do Voters Punish Corrupt Politicians? Experimental Evidence from Brazil," (2010), available at <http://epstein.law.northwestern.edu/research/LPEMdeFig.pdf>, accessed June 12, 2012.

22. Rundquist, Strom, and Peters discuss both possibilities. For evidence in support of the patronage hypothesis, see Luigi Manzetti and Carole J. Wilson, "Why Do Corrupt Governments Maintain Public Support?" *Comparative Political Studies*, 40 (August 2007), 949–70; Eric C. C. Chang and Nicholas N. Kerr, "Do Voters Have Different Attitudes Toward Corruption? The Sources and Implications of Popular Perceptions and Tolerance of Political Corruption," Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 116, December 2009.

23. Peters and Welch, 706.

24. Abhijit V. Banerjee and Rohini Pande, "Parochial Politics: Ethnic Preferences and Political Corruption," Department of Economics, MIT, Cambridge, MA, 2009.

25. Luigi Manzetti and Carole J. Wilson, "Corruption, Economic Satisfaction, and Confidence in Government: Evidence from Argentina," *The Latin Americanist*, 49 (March 2006), 131–09.

26. Barbara Geddes and Artur Ribeiro Neto, "Institutional Sources of Corruption in Brazil," *Third World Quarterly*, 13 (December 1992), 641–60; David Fleischer, "Political Corruption in Brazil: The Delicate Connection with Campaign Finance," *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 25 (1996), 297–321.

27. Kurt Weyland, "The Politics of Corruption in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy*, 9 (April 1998), 108–21.

28. Matthew Taylor, "For Brazil's Rousseff Uprooting Corruption No Easy Task," *World Politics Review*, 10 (January 2012), 9–13.

29. Carlos Pereira, Lucio Rennó, and David Samuels, "Corruption, Campaign Finance and Reelection," in Timothy J. Power and Matthew M. Taylor, eds., *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil: The Struggle for Accountability* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 80–99.

30. The origins of the phrase date back at least to the 1950s, where it was the informal campaign slogan of the politician Adhemar de Barros, alternately governor and mayor of São Paulo between the 1940s and

1960s. The word for the “@” symbol in Portuguese is “*arroba*,” making for a complete pun in the e-mail address. Luiza Cristina Villaméa Cotta, Adhemar de Barros (1901–1969): “A Origem do ‘Rouba, Mas Faz,’” Masters Thesis, University of São Paulo (2008); Adolpho Queiroz and Carlos Manhanelli, “Breve história dos slogans políticos nas eleições do Brasil republicano [A Brief History of Political Slogans in Brazilian Elections],” *Signos do Consumo* [Signs of Consumption] 1:2 (2009), 101–22.

31. Scott W. Desposato, “From Revolution to *Rouba, mas Faz?*” *ReVista*, <http://www.drclas.harvard.edu/revista/articles/view/864> (Spring 2006). Note that among those voters most concerned with corruption, Lula lost votes, as likely Lula voters opted to support other left-leaning presidential candidates. Rennó, “Corruption and Voting,” in Power and Taylor, eds., 56–79.

32. Marcus Figueiredo, “Convite ao ‘Rouba, mas faz,’” *Insight Inteligencia* (2004), 24–27, available at <http://www.insightinteligencia.com.br/25/PDF/0125.pdf>, accessed June 12, 2012.

33. Alberto Carlos Almeida, *Por Que Lula?* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2006); Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), *AméricasBarometer 2007*, available at <http://www.lapopsurveys.org>, accessed June 12, 2012.

34. Ferraz and Finan; Pereira, Melo, and Figueiredo. Ferraz and Finan raise the possibility that voters interpret negative audit information as being about incompetence rather than about corruption per se and therefore opt not to reelect politicians that they view as incompetent; they are unable, however, to distinguish between these two cognitive processes in their data; Ferraz and Finan, 742. In our experiment, since we manipulate information about both competence and corruption, we are able to demonstrate that respondents react directly to the fact of corruption itself.

35. Pereira, Rennó, and Samuels.

36. de Figueiredo, Hidalgo, and Kashara.

37. For other individual level analysis of the information hypothesis, see Rennó, “Corruption and Voting.”

38. Theresa J. DeMaio, “Social Desirability and Survey Measurement: A Review,” in Charles F. Turner and Elizabeth Martin, eds., *Surveying Subjective Phenomena*, Vol. 2 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 257–82; Anton J. Nederhof, “Methods of Coping with Social Desirability Bias: A Review,” *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 15 (July/September 1985), 263–80.

39. Although obviously not the only way to operationalize politician performance, we make use of public works to proxy for competence because, as illustrated above, this is common in public discourse and previous survey research in Brazil. The answers to follow-up questions in our survey show that respondents understood the information about public works as indicating that the mayor was skilled. We asked, “Given what you know about this mayor, how effective would you say that he is at getting funds for development projects from the national government?” In the “many public works” treatment, 66 percent answered “very effective” or “somewhat effective”; in the no information treatment, 55 percent answered that way; and in the “few public works” treatment, 43 percent did—all three differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

40. A balance test reveals this to be the case; see Appendix, online at <https://sites.google.com/site/mswinters1/home/research>.

41. For more on survey experiments, see Paul M. Sniderman and Douglas Grob, “Innovations in Experimental Design in General Population Attitude Surveys,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22 (August 1996), 377–99; James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, “The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science,” *American Political Science Review*, 100 (November 2006), 627–35; Brian J. Gaines, James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk, “The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined,” *Political Analysis*, 15 (Winter 2007), 1–21.

42. Hence there were a total of $2 \times 2 \times 3 = 12$ randomly-assigned vignettes. Assignment took place in advance of distribution of the surveys and was stratified by census tract. Enumerators received surveys with preprinted vignettes.

43. Similar third-person vignettes have been used in the 2006 Mexico Panel Study. Chappell Lawson et al., *The Mexico 2006 Panel Study*, <http://web.mit.edu/clawson/www/polisci/research/mexico06/intro.html>, accessed June 12, 2012.

44. By including information only about the incumbent and then asking whether or not the respondent thinks that Gabriel(a) would vote to reelect the incumbent, we avoid unnecessary complication of the vignette. Although the absence of challenger information may add noise to the data, it will not bias the results as long as there is no systematic correlation between treatment categories and the assumptions that respondents make about a challenger. This design also limits the total number of treatment groups to a reasonable amount. In pilot testing of the vignette and during the conduct of the survey itself, respondents did not ask about the challenger and were comfortable answering the

referendum-style question about the incumbent. Our response question also follows the format of typical vote choice questions and does not provide an opportunity for the respondent to say that Gabriel(a)'s most likely behavior would be to abstain from voting. That said, our framework could be extended to examine turnout decisions in future research.

45. In the online Appendix, we reproduce the main results using ordered logistic regression with the original four-category outcome variable.

46. IBOPE sampled 140 cities using a probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) method within 25 strata. These strata were defined by twenty-five of Brazil's twenty-seven states—the survey rotates on a monthly basis among three small states in the northern region of the country. Then census tracts were selected using PPS with stratification across zones of major metropolitan areas. Enumerators recruited individual respondents according to a quota scheme designed to produce a representative sample of the national population in terms of age, gender, education, and occupational category.

47. See the online Appendix. We also include results that disaggregate the data by region.

48. Kurer; Charles H. Blake, "Public Attitudes toward Corruption," in Charles H. Blake and Stephen D. Morris, eds., *Corruption and Democracy in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 94–107.

49. This survey asked respondents whether they would prefer a mayor who "wouldn't be that honest, but would resolve the municipality's problems," or one who would be "totally honest, but not that efficient."

50. Pereira, Rennó, and Samuels, 86. General reactions to corruption also vary with income level. Blake finds a negative correlation in Latin American World Values Survey data between income and tolerance for corruption; Blake, 104. Other authors, using WVS data from a sample of thirty-five countries, find that the wealthy are actually more tolerant of corruption than other citizens. Roberta Gatti, Stefano Paternostro, and Janele Rigolini, "Individual Attitudes toward Corruption: Do Social Effects Matter?" World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3122, Washington, D.C., 2003.

51. We define upper class as those falling into social classes A1, A2, and B1; middle class as those falling into social classes B2, C1, and C2; and poor as those falling into social classes D and E. The original set of social class designations is determined by a standard national formula based on nine different household goods and services (including hired household help) and the head of household's highest level of educational attainment.

52. In the interest of space, we omit results for the middle classes, whose responses fall in between those reported here, although they are closer to the results reported for the poor. In our table, the lowest classes make up about 25 percent of the sample, whereas the upper classes make up about 9 percent of the sample. This reflects Brazil's highly unequal distribution of income.

53. Daniel Kaufmann, Judith Montoriol-Garriga, and Francesca Recanatini, "How Does Bribery Affect Public Service Delivery? Micro-evidence from Service Users and Public Officials in Peru," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4492, Washington, D.C., 2008.

54. Brian Fried, Paul Lagunes, and Atheendar Venkataramani, "Corruption and inequality at the crossroad: A Multimethod Study of Bribery and Discrimination in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review*, 45 (2010), 76–97.

55. Jennifer Hunt and Sonia Laszlo, "Is Bribery Really Regressive? Bribery's Costs, Benefits and Mechanisms," *World Development*, 40 (February 2012), 355–72.

56. Robert C. Luskin, "Explaining Political Sophistication," *Political Behavior*, 12 (December 1990): 331–61. See, also, Stacy B. Gordon and Gary M. Segura, "Cross-National Variation in Political Sophistication of Individuals: Capability or Choice?" *Journal of Politics*, 59 (February 1997), 126–47.

57. Our survey did include measures of political interest. In the online Appendix, we show that similar patterns to those that we found among the wealthy also obtain among the politically interested, possibly providing support for the idea that the wealthy are more politically sophisticated.

58. We provide a more detailed analysis of this issue, including evidence that wealthy respondents replied to both direct and indirect questions in a similar manner, in the online Appendix.

59. Non-response rates to the vote intention question in our own survey were less than 2 percent.

60. Adam Berinsky, "The Two Faces of Public Opinion," *American Journal of Political Science*, 43 (October 1999), 1209–30; Adam Berinsky, "Political Context and the Survey Response," *Journal of Politics*, 64 (May 2002), 567–684.

61. Ferraz and Finan; Pereira, Rennó, and Samuel. Also, to some extent, de Figueiredo, Hidalgo and Kasahara; Carlos Pereira, Marcus André Melo, and Carlos Mauricio Figueiredo, "The Corruption-Enhancing Role of Re-Election Incentives? Counterintuitive Evidence from Brazil's Audit Reports," *Political Research Quarterly*, 62 (December 2009), 731–44.

62. See also Rennó, "Corruption and Voting."

63. Power and Taylor characterize the media this way: "While not all media organizations are autonomous of political pressures, the pluralism of the national press is a useful antidote: the scope of media coverage is broad, and the media cooperates closely with both the central institutions and with civil society organizations." Timothy J. Power and Matthew M. Taylor, "Introduction: Accountability Institutions and Political Corruption in Brazil," in Power and Taylor, eds., 20.

64. Lucio R. Rennó, "Escandalos e voto: as eleicoes presidenciais brasileiras de 2006 [Scandals and Votes: The Brazilian Presidential Elections of 2006]," *Opinio Publica* 13:2 (2007), 260–82.

65. Both questions about the reality of corrupt politicians in Brazil were asked at the end of the survey and therefore after respondents had heard the experimental vignette. We detect no effect of the stimulus on the ways in which people answered these two questions—the proportion of respondents that say bribe-taking is common is indistinguishable between the group of respondents that heard a vignette about a corrupt politician and the group that heard a vignette that said the politician was not corrupt ($p < 0.63$); similarly there is no difference in the proportion of people in each condition who said that they had ever voted for a corrupt politician ($p < 0.86$).

66. We first asked about politicians in general and then about the voter's past behavior, an order which should, if anything, make consistent replies more likely.

67. Jason Barabas and Jennifer Jerit, "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review*, 104 (May 2010), 226–42.

68. Freedom House, Country Report: Brazil (2009), available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&country=7573&year=2009>, accessed June 12, 2012.

69. The Clean Slate Law of 2009 bans politicians who have been convicted of a crime at the appellate level from holding office. See Taylor.

70. Piero Stanig, "Regulation of Speech and Media Coverage of Corruption: An Empirical Analysis of the Mexican Press," London School of Economics, 2010.