

JULY 14, 2021



THE IMPACT OF
CORRUPTION
VICTIMIZATION ON
ELECTORAL ALIENATION
IN LATIN AMERICA
MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

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FINAL COPY

**THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION VICTIMIZATION ON ELECTORAL
ALIENATION IN LATIN AMERICA**

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Major Research Paper, API 6999

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Submission Date: July 14, 2021

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ABSTRACT

In Latin America, corruption may lead individuals to believe they are unable to influence the course of politics, lowering their electoral participation and support for democracy. To investigate this assumption, this article tests whether corruption victimization impacts electoral alienation. I assess how personal experience with corruption affects the intention to vote with survey data from Latin America and the Caribbean. My results show that corruption victimization increases electoral alienation in all 18 Latin American countries under analysis. More specifically, this study's core linear probability model (LPM) indicates that the likelihood of someone casting a valid vote in the upcoming national elections falls by 2.8 percentage points when this person is a recent victim of corruption, nullifying the engagement effect of three years of formal education, all confounding variables held constant. Following a series of robustness tests, this finding corroborates the hypothesis that corruption victimization lowers citizens' perception of their own power to influence political change, leading to more abstention or invalid voting. At the same time, the effect of corruption victimization extends to support for the entire political system as corruption victims are 2.1 percentage points less likely to support democracy as the best form of government and 7.1 percentage points more likely to support a military coup when corruption is deemed severe. These findings advance existing knowledge on the effects of corruption on democracy and political legitimacy, and may help policy-makers in the design of anti-corruption policies and programs.

Keywords: Corruption victimization; electoral alienation; comparative political behavior; LAPOP; Latin America.

INTRODUCTION

From 2014 to 2020, a corruption scandal swamped Latin America. Also known as Operation Car Wash, this investigation initially revealed that construction firms were offering bribes to executives from Brazil's state oil company *Petrobras* to award them lucrative contracts. Soon the investigations discovered that collusion was not limited to the Brazilian borders. There was an extensive and intricate web of political and corporate racketeering by which construction companies paid bribes to secure government contracts to build roads, bridges, dams, and highways throughout Latin America. One of these companies, Odebrecht, informed US authorities of the payment of 788 million U.S. dollars in bribes to government officials in at least 11 countries in this region (Berti, 2021).

Given the number of countries implied in these illegal schemes, this operation revealed that corruption at the highest levels of government was broad and commonplace in Latin America. The result was the conviction of more than 165 executives and government officials, and the arrest of notorious politicians, from all the political spectrum, including six former Latin American presidents: Lula Da Silva and Michel Temer in Brazil; Mauricio Funes in El Salvador; Ricardo Martinelli in Panama; Ollanta Humala and Alejandro Toledo in Peru; and the resignation of presidents Otto Pérez-Molina of Guatemala and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski of Peru (Nolen, 2017). Most of these politicians are accused of accepting bribes for their own enrichment and to finance their political campaigns.

But corruption, broadly defined by academia as the misuse of public office for private gains (Lipset & Lenz, 2002; Rose-Ackerman, 2008; Treisman, 2007), is a multifaceted phenomenon. It can be grand and political, as revealed by Operation Car Wash, but also petty

and invisible, depending on who is involved, where it takes place, and how much is taken¹. It can be manifested in many forms: bribery, clientelism, extortion, embezzlement, graft, lobbying, nepotism, and patronage, and its impacts have been investigated especially on the economics and political science realms.

From an economic perspective, some researchers claim that corruption may negatively impact development and growth, as it creates less efficient governments (La Porta et al., 1999), lowers private investments (Mauro, 1995), and increases political instability (Mo, 2001). Corruption also limits the efficiency of economic markets and levies a higher cost to development than taxation (Campos et al., 1999; Shleifer & Robert, 1993), increasing economic inequality and poverty (Gupta et al., 2002; Li et al., 2000) and driving away foreign investors who may steer clear of a nation where corruption is rampant (Wei, 2000).

In Political Science, the effects of corruption are mostly investigated with a focus on how it affects the political system and citizens' political behavior. Previous studies show that, within countries where corruption perception is widespread, citizens may become disgruntled with the political system, and declining levels of trust and legitimacy in democracy may result, potentially undermining the political stability (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Bohn, 2012; Canache & Allison, 2005; Seligson, 2002; Zechmeister & Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010). Conversely, other scholars claim that corruption may lead to higher political participation in both institutionalized

¹ According to Transparency International, "grand corruption exists at the highest level of government and refers to acts distorting the central functioning of the state. Petty corruption exists in the everyday encounter between public officials and citizens and refers to acts where public officials abuse their power when citizens try to access public services such as schools, hospitals and police departments. Political corruption, finally, is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth". Retrieved from "CORRUPTIONARY A-Z", available on <https://www.transparency.org/en/corruptionary>.

and non-institutionalized forms (Inman & Andrews, 2008; Kostadinova, 2009). This ambivalence between corruption and political participation is seen in the Brazilian context after Operation Car Wash. Whereas some analysts argue that this mass scandal fueled a popular sense of victimization and stirred political participation in major protests in favor of Dilma's Rousseff impeachment (Watts, 2017), others argue that corruption disenchanted the Brazilian population, manifested through higher absence in the ballot box, and higher support for authoritarian leaders, in which Jair Bolsonaro's election in 2018 is a symptom (Rennó, 2020; Saccone, 2018).

This study fits within the political science realm about the effects of corruption on political behavior. Rather than focusing on grand or political corruption, my main interest is to shed light on the individual effects of petty corruption in Latin American countries. Petty corruption can be manifested in various ways, through the most ordinary interactions between citizens and those representing the various instances of government (municipalities, state or provinces, and the federation). The most common form is through government officials asking citizens bribes to provide public services: better assistance at a hospital, securing a seat in a public school, provision of a national identification card by a courthouse. Bribery is also present within the security institutions, and it not uncommon for citizens to be bribed by the police. Albeit commonplace, there is a lack of robust evidence on how these corrupt practices impact citizens' electoral behavior in Latin America (Školník, 2020; Stockemer et al., 2013).

The present study aims to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the effect of corruption victimization on electoral alienation, herein also referred to as electoral apathy or voter apathy, or by its antonym, electoral engagement. More specifically, I test whether recent corruption victims are more likely to withdraw from the electoral process by invalidating their

votes or being absent, or whether corruption would fuel electoral engagement by casting a valid vote either to the incumbent party or candidate, or any opposition party or candidate.

The theoretical reason for believing that corruption victimization has a causal impact on electoral alienation relies on the concept of political efficacy. This much-debated concept refers to citizens' self-confidence in their ability to change or influence the political process, alone or in concert with others, as well as their belief in the government's responsiveness (Milbrath, 1965). If corruption experience lowers citizens' political efficacy, then it is expected that their electoral alienation would increase, expressed through absenteeism or invalid voting on elections. On the other hand, if corruption is a catalyst for engagement, then electoral alienation would diminish, and citizens would feel empowered to seek change through the electoral process.

To examine this question, I developed a modified version of an analytical framework from recent work on the individual-level consequences of corruption on voter turnout and support for democracy (Canache et al., 2016; Heath et al., 2016; Ko & Samajdar, 2010; Seligson, 2006; Treisman, 2007). This modified framework includes two components: (1) people's personal experiences with bribery and the possible impact of these experiences on citizens' electoral alienation; (2) people's personal experience with bribery and the possible impact of those experiences on general support for democracy (or authoritarianism). This study aims to show that, beyond voter turnout, researchers should also investigate why corruption victims would become alienated from the electoral process, feeling that any attempt to influence the political system through their votes will be a fruitless exercise.

I test this framework with the 2019 AmericasBarometer/LAPOP survey data², which allows me to measure corruption victimization at the local level – through personal bribery experiences – and intended electoral behavior on future national elections, controlling for socioeconomic variables and attitudinal variables. Further, these data are available for over 27,000 respondents, from 18 nations in the Americas.

I also provide a serious treatment to reverse causality and endogeneity. First, reverse causality, the possibility that the dependent variable may impact the independent variable, questioning the direction of the causal relationship between corruption victimization and electoral alienation, can be ruled out for two reasons. The temporal order of events is constructed to ensure recent experience with corruption always happens before any intention to vote in future elections is assessed by LAPOP. Second, I also control for prior political participation to isolate the potential effect of previous voter behavior on electoral alienation.

More challenging is endogeneity. To what extent can we ensure corruption victimization is exogenous to electoral alienation? Some potential confounding variables are hard to measure given their subjective nature, such as personality traits and local political culture. For instance, an individual may be reclusive, impacting both the odds of being victimized by avoiding external interactions and their intention to vote by not leaving their household. In a similar vein, cultural factors at the local level may impact the acceptance of bribery among government officials and the propensity to vote. Lastly, there may also be other unobserved mechanisms that affect both

² I thank the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and its major supporters (the United States Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Vanderbilt University) for making the data available.

this article's independent and dependent variables, challenging my assumption that corruption victimization is an exogenous variable.

To circumvent this problem, I address endogeneity in two ways. The first is by running a two-stage least square model (2SLS), using an instrumental variable that relies on water service provision per week for each respondent. This instrument meets the validity and relevance of an instrumental variable for some reasons. There is a highly and statistically significant correlation between water provision and corruption victimization (F statistic = 69.80, significant at the $p < .01$ level); water provision is exogenous by not being caused by corruption victimization nor individuals' choices and behavior; and this instrumental variable is not able to impact electoral alienation directly except through corruption victimization. I assume that the lower the water provision of an individual, the higher their likelihood of interacting with the government, resulting in bribery victimization. Secondly, I use a matching technique to compare victims and non-victims within the same municipality, reducing any bias related to local political culture. This provides robust evidence on the direction of the causal relationship between corruption victimization and electoral alienation and addresses endogeneity, reducing measurement error and omitted variable bias.

My results show that corruption victimization impacts electoral engagement negatively in all Latin American countries under analysis. More specifically, this study's core linear probability model (LPM) shows that the likelihood of someone casting a valid vote in the upcoming national elections falls by 2.8 percentage points when this person is a recent victim of corruption, all confounding variables held constant. In addition, there is a negative relationship between corruption victimization and support for democracy, where victims are 2.1 percentage

points less likely to support democracy as the best form of government and 7.1 percentage points more likely to support a military coup when corruption is deemed severe.

This major research paper is organized as follows. The following section provides an overview of why this topic is important for Latin America, the challenges of measuring corruption, and the theoretical link and empirical evidence for the relationship between corruption victimization and electoral alienation. Subsequently, I describe the survey data for this major research paper and present some descriptive statistics. The fifth section describes the method and results. The sixth section discusses the limitations of this study. The following section addresses threats to causal inference, including reverse causation, endogeneity, the role of mandatory voting, and municipality effects. The penultimate section examines the implications of victims' electoral alienation for democracy. The article concludes by suggesting that corruption poses a threat to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America, and some policy recommendations are suggested to address corruption at the local level as well as venues for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corruption and democracy in Latin America

Corruption is not a new phenomenon, but public attention to this theme has become more prominent in Latin America recently. This is not a coincidence. It is widely accepted that democratization across the continent in the 1980s, which led to the end of military regimes, bolstered critical scrutiny of public officials. As these countries started to embody what democracy entails - a free and independent press, a political system with party competition, the

presence of civil society organizations and counterbalanced institutions, and the strengthening of the rule of law – citizens’ expectations about government responsiveness and transparency have raised, and corruption became central in the public debate (Baley & Paras, 2006; Morris & Blake, 2009).

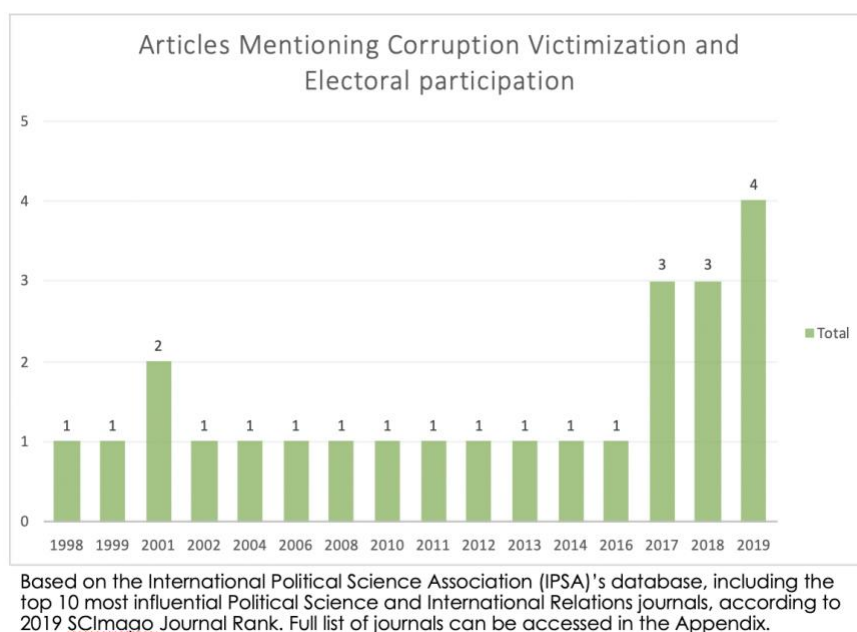
Nonetheless, democratization in Latin America has also created new opportunities for corrupt behavior. Corruption may tend to increase – or at least the perception of it – as countries begin to develop democratic systems because these nations do not dispose of effective anti-corruption mechanisms, “being trapped in a vicious cycle of high corruption and low-performing democratic institutions” (Pring & Vrushni, 2019). An example is competitive elections, which require funding and may make candidates and political parties more willing to accept payoffs (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Thus, “recent democracies may experience high levels of corruption when they lack transparency in political and campaign financing, have outdated laws to ensure freedom of information and the protection of whistle-blowers, or have unreliable media” (UNODC, 2021).

Latin America illustrates this complex and multifaceted relationship between democracy and corruption. As the region tries to consolidate its political systems, corruption represents a basic denial of justice and a menace to the essence of citizenship by converting collective goods into personal favors. The need to reduce real and perceived levels of corruption is fundamental to the further deepening and consolidation of democracy. Ultimately, a greater understanding of the impact of corruption on people’s lives can help governments to combat corruption and analyze how corruption victimization affects citizens’ relationship with public institutions.

The complexity of measuring corruption

Surprisingly though, empirical studies on the effects of corruption victimization on electoral engagement have been incipient. Quick research on the International Political Science Abstracts (IPSA) database using the keywords “corruption victimization” and “voter turnout” or “electoral participation”, from 1930 to 2021, for the top ten most influential political science and international relations journals according to 2019 *SCImago Journal Rank index*, yielded only 24 results. The lack of robust evidence on this theme highlights the need for consensus on the effects of corruption victimization on electoral behavior.

Figure 1 -



The lack of robust evidence may be due to the complexity of measuring corruption. First, corruption encompasses many illegal acts - bribery, nepotism, patronage, and clientelism - which are hard to identify, as some of them are subject to interpretation at the local context (i.e. employing a distant relative may not be considered nepotism, although the familiar ties between

the employer and employee may be strong). Secondly, corruption is inherently confidential due to its judicial consequences if discovered and proved. Unlike studies in other academic fields, which may investigate amoral subjects, such as the number of times a person reads political information a day or how many hours a respondent works per week, it is not feasible for researchers to ask a police officer whether they have accepted bribes for not reporting misconducts nor whether a government official asked for a bribe to provide a public service. The sensitivity of the subject as well as the potential risks of investigating it on the ground makes corruption a cumbersome academic research topic.

That is why several international corruption indexes (ICIs) have relied on corruption perception as a proxy for real corruption estimates rather than direct victimization. According to Ko & Samajdar (2010), in their review of the validity and reliability of six corruption indexes, corruption perception is widely used in academic studies as a proxy for real corruption because of the lack of alternative cross-national measures. Currently, some popular ICIs that uses corruption perception as a proxy for corruption are the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Transparency International, the Control of Corruption Index of the World Bank, the International Country Risk Guide of PRS group, and the World Value Survey of the World Value Survey Association³.

Even though the reliability and error measurement of these corruption indexes have improved over time, they still present some limitations. The main one is that not all of them measure the general public's perception of corruption, although some academic studies employ

³ Another corruption perception index is the Bribe Payers' Index of Transparency International. The latest version of this index was published in 2011 (Transparency International, 2011)

them for this purpose. For example, CPI relies only on surveys of businesspeople and assessments of country analysts; it does not include the perceptions of laypeople. Ko & Samajdar (2010) explain that CPI's respondents are mainly expatriates and international business experts from multinational firms. Similarly, WBCC's corruption index relies mostly on expert assessments. Among its 31 sources, only 8 sources use survey methods and the other 22 sources use polls of country analysts at commercial risk-rating agencies, non-governmental organizations, and multinational aid agencies. These indexes perform well as an evaluation of business transactions, but they may not be appropriate as a proxy for the overall range of corruption activities happening in the countries under evaluation.

In a similar vein, Seligson (2006) argues that a problem with corruption perception is that it is difficult to separate stereotypes from reality. These indexes do not attempt to report on how frequently bribery actually occurs but on how corrupt the respondents perceive their countries to be. Additionally, respondents' perception of corruption can be misleading due to subject factors (Ko & Samajdar, 2010; Seligson, 2002). Respondents, for instance, may report a high degree of observed acts of corruption due to what they watch on TV, read in the newspapers, or see on social media, without this news really reflecting what commonly happens in their communities.

A more recent approach aims to overcome the challenge of measuring corruption by using people's direct experience with it. This measurement is done by directly asking householders' experience of corruption in different countries instead of asking respondents how they perceive corruption, similar to crime victimization surveys. In general, this assessment is made through the most common type of corruption at the local level: bribery. These crime victimization surveys allow us to measure the rates of victimization, the most frequent types of bribes, and other real corruption experiences instead of subjective perception. Examples of

surveys that allow for the measurement of corruption victimization across countries are the International Crime Victims Survey of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute – whose latest publication dates back to 2000 -, and the Latin America Public Opinion Project/Americas Barometer of Vanderbilt University, whose latest survey was published in 2019.

It is also worth noticing that, even if we directly ask citizens about their actual corruption experience, we cannot fully control measurement error. As previously explained, corruption encompasses multiple crimes, such as nepotism and lobby, which may not be included in victimization surveys. Secondly, items on corruption experience are often sector-specific and follow a survey question on respondent's contact with an institution; therefore, there may be sectors excluded from the analysis, including the private one⁴ (i.e giving an expensive gift to a bank manager to secure a loan). Thirdly, there may also be a non-sampling error caused by misreporting (UNODC, 2018). This may happen either because some people may not want to report their experience with bribery for psychological, legal, or sociological reasons; they may also misremember - even though the surveys' intent to addresses their experience in the last 12 months - and they might not consider they were victimized if the value paid was low.

Such limitations notwithstanding, researchers consider corruption experience measures as one of the most comprehensive and unbiased information about corruption (Heath et al., 2016; Ko & Samajdar, 2010; Seligson, 2006; Treisman, 2007). Through an assessment of current efforts and robustness of reported findings by political scientists and economists to explain cross-

⁴ For more information on types of corruption in the private sector and its consequences, please see “Forms and Manifestations of Private Sector Corruption” on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime website. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/anti-corruption/module-5/key-issues/forms-and-manifestations-of-private-sector-corruption.html>

national variation in corruption, Treisman (2007) argues that scholarly efforts should be redirected from “perception indices to experience-based surveys to ensure questions are designed to elicit factual answers about the respondents’ interactions with bribe-soliciting officials”. Such information would allow mitigating underreporting and measurement error, especially when cross-national data collection is made according to the same modes of data collection. Finally, it will also allow us to differentiate the effect of corruption victimization and corruption perception.

The causal link and empirical evidence of corruption on electoral alienation

There is no consensus on the effects of corruption – either measured through corruption perception or actual victimization - on electoral alienation. Recent and scarce research on this theme show mixed results. On the one hand, some studies find a positive correlation between crime or perception of corruption and voters’ engagement, increasing strategic voting. On the other hand, other studies conclude that corruption suppresses electoral engagement, increasing voter apathy towards the electoral process.

Both strands, however, agree on one point: the causal link between corruption victimization and electoral participation lies in the effect of corruption on political efficacy. This concept is central for democracy, and it refers to citizens’ self-confidence in their ability to change or influence the political process, alone or in concert with others (Milbrath, 1965). More precisely, political efficacy is used to understand political behavior related to what makes citizens motivated to participate in political affairs. The general idea is that corruption affects an individual’s perception of the possibility to influence the government. If corruption victimization lowers citizen’s perception of their own power to influence political change, they would abstain

from participating – either by invalid voting or absenteeism. According to Power & Garand, (2007), I call this phenomenon electoral alienation, herein also referred to as voter apathy or electoral apathy. On the other hand, if corruption victimization creates enraged citizens, they would be more willing to punish corrupt politicians and change their local reality through participation (Olsson, 2014), also called electoral engagement.

Amongst the academic strand arguing that corruption has a mobilizing effect on electoral participation, we find Inman & Andrews (2008)’s study. Based on experimental research with students from a university and survey analysis from a national sample in Senegal, the authors conclude that perceptions of corruption act as a mobilizing factor for both voting and protesting in this country, regardless of respondents’ socioeconomic background. At the aggregate level, based on gubernatorial elections held in the fifty US states over the period from 1979 to 2005, Escaleras et al. (2012) find that voter turnout is higher in states where more public officials had been convicted of corruption. But unlike Senegal’s voter behavior that aims to punish corrupt politicians, the mobilizing dynamic in the US is shaped by economic reasons; political campaigns seek jurisdictions where corruption opportunities are available and will invest more resources to mobilize voters on election day.

In Europe, results are less clear. Drawing on survey data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) for eight Eastern European countries⁵ from 2001-2005, Kostadinova (2009) finds that political corruption perception has an ambivalent effect: it may mobilize people to cast a ballot, but also corrode respondents’ beliefs in their capacity to influence their political

⁵ These countries are: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Slovenia.

systems. This intermediate effect, disbelief in the political system owing to high perception of corruption, may discourage citizens from voting. The net result of these two diverging trends is a slightly positive effect on voter turnout, showing that perception of political corruption has a greater impact on mobilizing citizens to vote than the disenchantment caused by the decreasing trust in political institutions. However, questions remain on whether electoral participation means actual electoral engagement; that is, casting a valid vote in the ballot box.

Turning to Latin America, Školník (2020) uses Colombia as a case study to analyze the impact of corruption victimization and the perception of corruption on electoral and non-electoral participation. The multivariate regression models show mixed results for corruption victimization and corruption perception on political participation. On the one hand, being a victim of corruption is positively correlated with the intention to vote in the next presidential election as well as previous participation in political gatherings (city council, town meetings, community meetings, among others). On the other hand, respondents' perception of corruption among public officials is negatively correlated to electoral and non-electoral participation.

Within the predominant view that corruption undermines electoral participation, Dahlberg & Solevid (2016) find that perceiving politicians as corrupt decreases turnout in general, regardless of the level of actual national corruption, based on country-level data from 26 countries. The study also concludes that there is no statistically significant association between corruption perception and voter turnout in countries where measured corruption is high. The question of whether these findings would apply to developing countries remains, as only four countries of this sort were included (Brazil, Bulgaria, Mexico, and Peru).

In Mexico, a random experiment at the municipal level in 2009 conducted by Chong et al. (2015) investigates whether information on incumbent political corruption disengages people

from the political processes. The authors find that voters' level of information on incumbent political corruption has a negative widespread effect: it decreases support for the incumbent, the challenger party, and the political system in general, leading to more electoral alienation. The explanation is that information on incumbent corruption weakens citizen's confidence in the responsiveness of electoral institutions and public officials. If perceived corruption leads voters to believe that voting will not benefit them - either because they lose trust in governments or those governments's ability to respond to constituents' needs - then they are likely to abstain.

Similarly, Stockemer et al. (2013) analyze whether electorates mobilize at election time to oust (or support) corrupt officials or, rather, they become disengaged and abstain from voting as corruption increases. The authors employ voter turnout as their dependent variable and a corruption perception index as their main independent variable based on the Political Risk Services' International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) and a dataset on turnout in 70 democratic countries from 1984 to 2009. To overcome the possibility of reverse causality, the authors employ two instrumental variables - GDP per capita and a country's degree of democracy⁶ - as both have high collinearity with control of corruption and low collinearity with voter turnout. This aggregate-level study finds that corruption perception has a statistically significant negative impact on voter turnout. More specifically, the authors conclude that for every one-point increase in a country's corruption perception, turnout will increase by more than six points, if all other variables are held constant. This implies that very corrupt countries have 20-30 percentage points fewer citizens turning out at elections compared with countries with little corruption.

⁶ Stockemer (2012)'s assessment of a country's degree of democracy is based on data from Freedom House (2009), which classifies countries from two to five.

In Colombia, Carreras & Vera (2018) assess the relationship between information on political corruption and electoral participation. This experimental study randomly selected respondents to be informed about a hypothetical case in which a legislative candidate was either a formerly honest governor or a corrupt one, based on an accusation from an international organization. As the dependent variable, respondents were asked how likely they would cast a vote in the next legislative election on a scale from 1-7. The study finds a negative correlation between receiving credible information about the corrupt behavior of politicians running for office and the intention to vote in future legislative elections. The authors conclude that political corruption demobilizes citizens even when a candidate, albeit allegedly corrupt, has provided desired policy outcomes, refuting the idea that citizens in Latin America might trade integrity for public goods.

Lastly, one of the few studies to utilize direct experience with corruption, Seligson (2006) assesses the impact of corruption victimization on political legitimacy in five countries in Latin America (El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Bolivia). By using survey data from 1998 through 2002, the study evaluates how being a direct victim of corruption may impact the extent to which respondents trust their systems of government. Even though the study does not intend to prove causality, it shows a negative association between being a corruption victim and political legitimacy, which may lead to more abstention from elections according to the political efficacy theory.

Summary of empirical evidence

In summary, research on corruption victimization and electoral alienation provides mixed and insufficient results. While most scholars argue that corruption may harm electoral

engagement, other studies show a mobilization effect when corruption perception is high, showing that there may be a non-linear relationship between corruption perception and electoral participation, dependent on corruption context. In Dahlberg & Solevid's (2016) study, perceiving corruption negatively affects turnout, but only in countries with low to medium levels of system corruption. Conversely, it may also be the case that in less corrupt places, a low level of corruption may stir electoral participation to oust corrupt candidates.

Moreover, the majority of studies focus on the effects of political corruption, not on petty corruption and actual victimization. The lack of studies on direct experience with corruption is of high importance for policymakers and academics as it may reveal a different dynamic from corruption perception. Only two studies, Seligson (2006) and Školník (2020), employ respondents' experiences to grasp the link between corruption victimization and electoral participation, and their results are divergent. Equally concerning is the lack of cross-country studies focused on Latin America where corruption is high and robust evidence on this theme is needed. Lastly, there is a need for an in-depth empirical analysis that goes beyond voter turnout; that is, the simple act of casting a vote, to what this vote really entails. Would corruption experience lead to more electoral alienation or electoral engagement, or have no effect at all? What are the consequences of corruption for democratic consolidation?

DATA AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Data

Data for this research are drawn from the 2018/2019 AmericasBarometer surveys. These surveys, sponsored by the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)/Vanderbilt

University, were administered from September 2018 to July 2019 to citizens in 20 nations throughout the Americas⁷. For this research, data from 18 countries were included⁸, except for Canada and the United States. The items included in the present analysis were asked of just over 27,000 respondents. I use the 2018/2019 AmericasBarometer surveys because this is the most recent nationally representative survey of voting-age adults in the Americas that covers corruption experience and attitudes towards corruption in the region as well as relevant socioeconomic variables. Interviews were conducted in all major languages, using face-to-face interviews and handheld devices, which helps to reduce data entry errors that could occur when responses are transferred from paper to databases. Samples in each country were developed using a multi-stage probabilistic design (with quotas at the household level for most countries) and were stratified by major regions of the country, size of municipality, and by urban and rural areas within municipalities, with a sampling error of 2.5% (LAPOP, 2021). The surveys do not include people who are in boarding schools, jails, hospitals, military barracks, and police academies. Finally, only one respondent per household was interviewed.

The correlates of corruption

To understand the impact of corruption victimization on electoral alienation, it is important to assess the average profile of victims and non-victims of corruption in Latin America. In this sub-section, I firstly explain how this variable is constructed using the 2019

⁷ Countries in the Americas not included in the original 2019 AmericasBarometer's dataset are: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela.

⁸ The 18 countries included in this research are: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

LAPOP dataset and the average profile of victims and non-victims. Secondly, I explain why I chose to further analyze these individual correlates of corruption victimization based on previous research (Treisman, 2000; Seligson, 2006; Mangafić & Veselinović, 2020).

To build the descriptive profile of victims and non-victims of corruption, I rely on respondents' information about their income, years of education, marital status, number of children in the household, ethnicity, access to the internet, and region of residence (whether urban or rural).⁹ These demographic characteristics of corruption victims were chosen according to previous research on the determinants of corruption victimization. Treisman (2000), for example, argues that individual exposure to corruption is correlated to personal characteristics, such as age, income, gender, educational level, as well as country-specific factors, namely the legal system and cultural factors. To assess whether a person was a direct victim of corruption, LAPOP asks several questions related to recent bribery experience, as follows:

Table 1 - Main variables for corruption victimization

Question	Sample
Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last twelve months?	Asked to all respondents
In the last twelve months, did any government employee ask you for a bribe?	Asked to all respondents
In the last twelve months, to process any kind of document in your municipal government, like a permit for example, did you have to pay any money above that required by law?	Only asked to respondents who informed any official dealing in the municipal/local government

⁹ A complete description of all variables used can be found in the Appendix

In your work, have you been asked to pay a bribe in the last twelve months?	Only asked to respondents who are employed
Did you have to pay a bribe to the courts in the last twelve months?	Only asked to respondents who informed any official dealing with the courts
In order to be seen in a hospital or a clinic in the last twelve months, did you have to pay a bribe?	Only asked to respondents who used public health in the last twelve months
Have you had to pay a bribe at school in the last twelve months?	Only asked to respondents with at least a child at school in the last twelve months

Some of the questions above were not asked to all respondents, only to those with recent direct experience with some public services. To avoid double-counting victims and non-victims when measuring the percentage of corruption within each country and by gender, I created a dummy variable that admits the value of 1 if a person was a victim of bribery in the last 12 months in any of the categories in Table 1 and 0 otherwise.

In Latin America, victims of corruption are on average younger than non-victims, are male, possess more years of formal education, are more likely to be married, are slightly wealthier, and have more children.

Table 2 - Profile of Victims and Non-Victims of corruption

Characteristics of Victims in Latin America						
As Compared to Nonvictims, Victims of Corruption Are. . .						
Younger	More likely to be male	More formally educated	Slightly to be married or equally married	With more children	Equally urban	Slightly wealthier

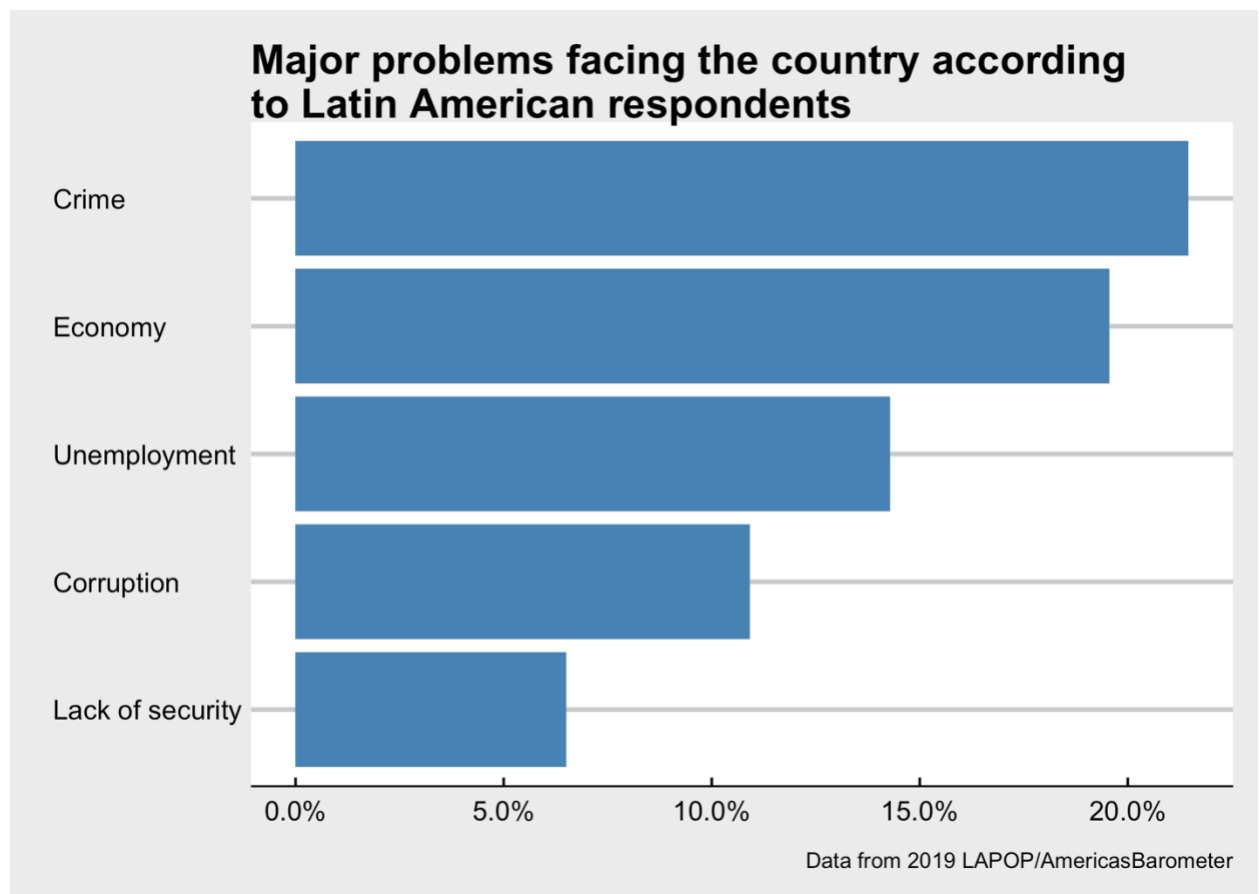
To understand why certain personal characteristics may explain the profile of corruption victims, we should pay attention to individuals' interaction with the public administration.

Seligson (2006) posits that wealthier individuals are more exposed to corruption because they have more business to transact and, therefore, more interaction with the bureaucracy than poorer individuals. With regards to gender, Latin America's patriarchal society may explain why men tend to be more exposed to corruption than women. Males represent a larger portion of the labor market, increasing interactions with government officials. As for age, younger people are more prone to victimization due to their lack of a solidarity network that provides them reciprocal exchanges and avoids corrupt practices. Unlike older adults, young people are still settling in life and may be more in touch with the administration (Mangafić & Veselinović, 2020).

Where does corruption take place?

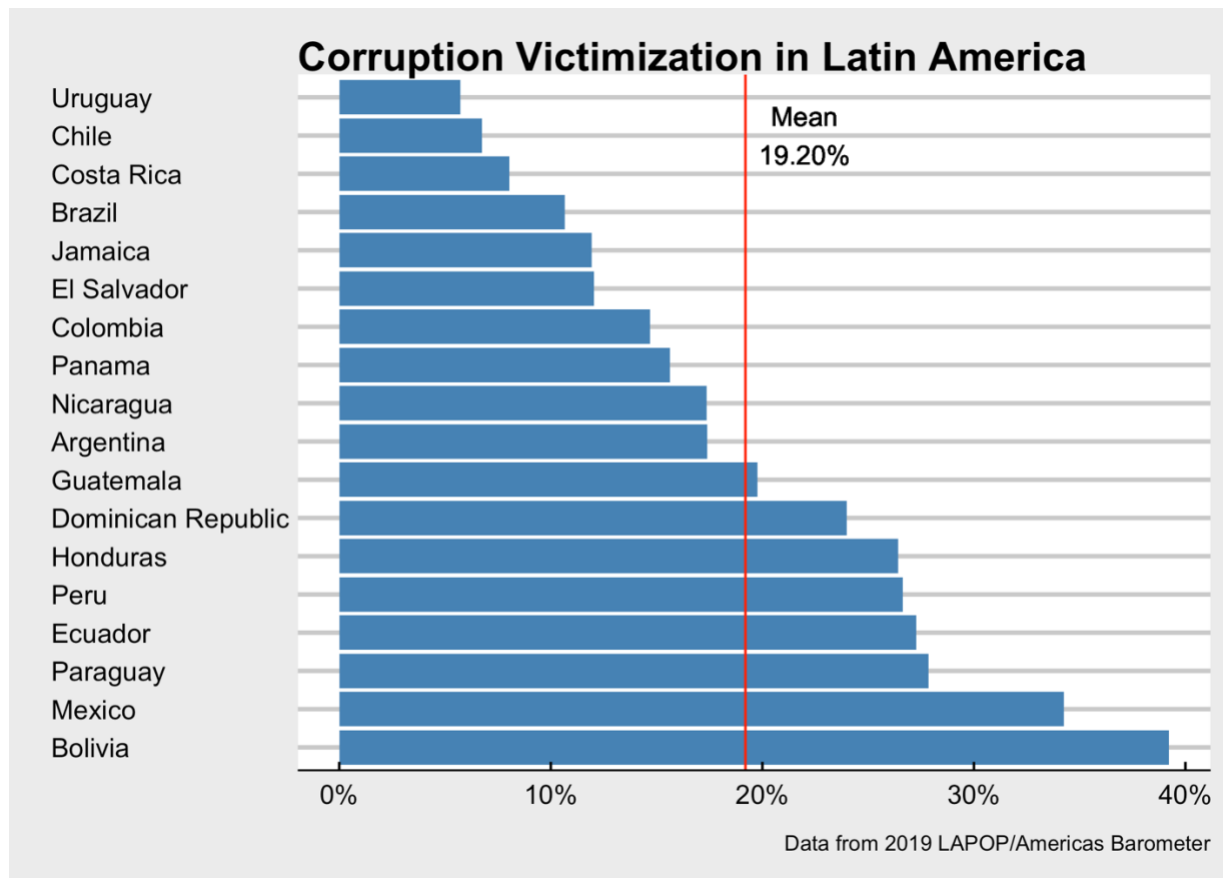
Interestingly, corruption is a major concern for Latin Americans. LAPOP asks interviewees to mention the most serious problem faced by their country according to their opinion. Corruption ranks as the 4th most pressing social issue, losing only for crime, prospects with the economy, and unemployment.

Figure 2 - Most serious problems affecting Latin American countries



Corruption victimization is also widespread in Latin America and emerging in many different forms, some more frequently experienced than others. The figure below reveals that, on average, 20% of all Latin Americans were victims of unsolicited bribery between 2018-2019. In comparison, Western Europe presents an average victimization rate four times lower than Latin America, around 5% (Pring, 2016). Bolivia and Mexico rank as the countries with the highest victimization rates, 39.23% and 34.24% respectively, while Uruguay and Chile present the lowest victimization rates, around 6% and 7%, a corruption rate similar to Italy (7%) and Poland (7%).

Figure 3 - Corruption Victimization rates in Latin America

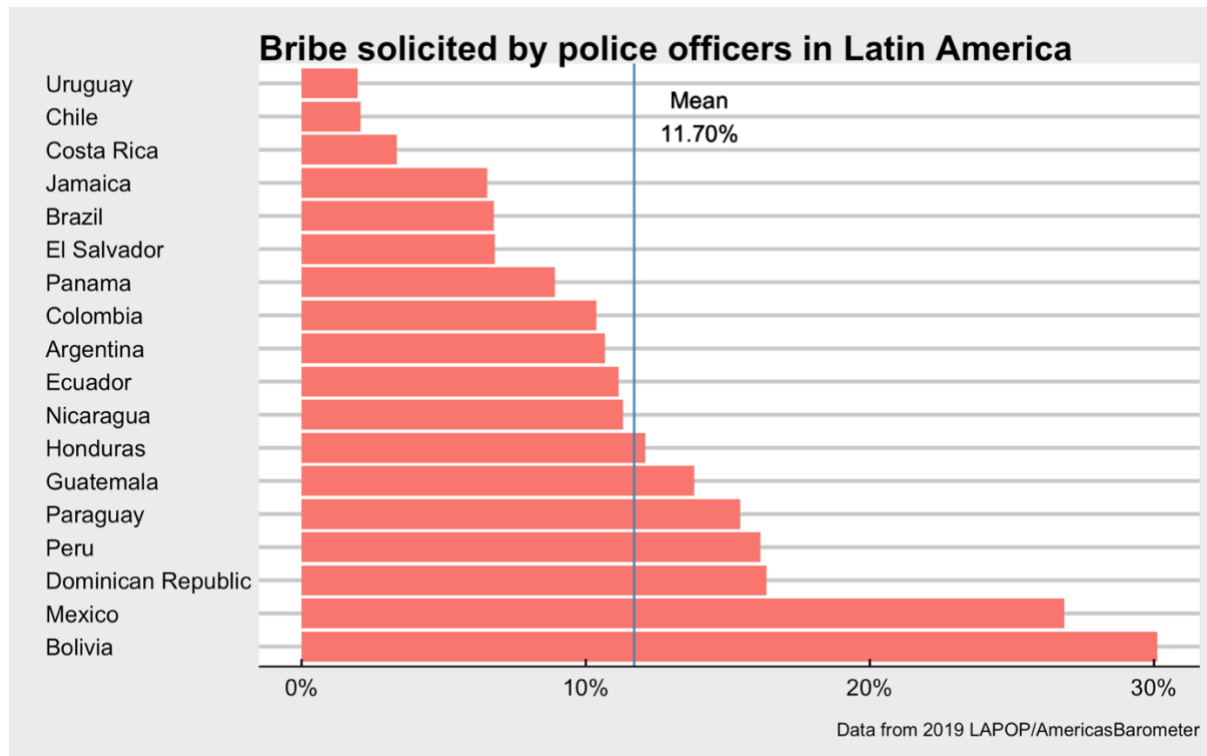


Unfortunately, one common way in which corruption victimizes Latin Americans is through the very public officials who should be involved in controlling it – namely, the police force. The results shown in Figure 4 illustrate that police officers soliciting bribes is a common practice in Latin America. In Bolivia, almost 1 in 3 respondents have reported being a victim of bribery by the police, an unaltered finding that Seligson's (2006) study on corruption victimization in six Latin American countries highlighted almost 14 years ago. On the other hand, Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica present lower levels of police corruption with less than 4% of reported victimization on average.

Latin American respondents were also asked about unsolicited bribes by a public official in the last 12 months, and the comparative results are shown in Figure 5. On average, corruption

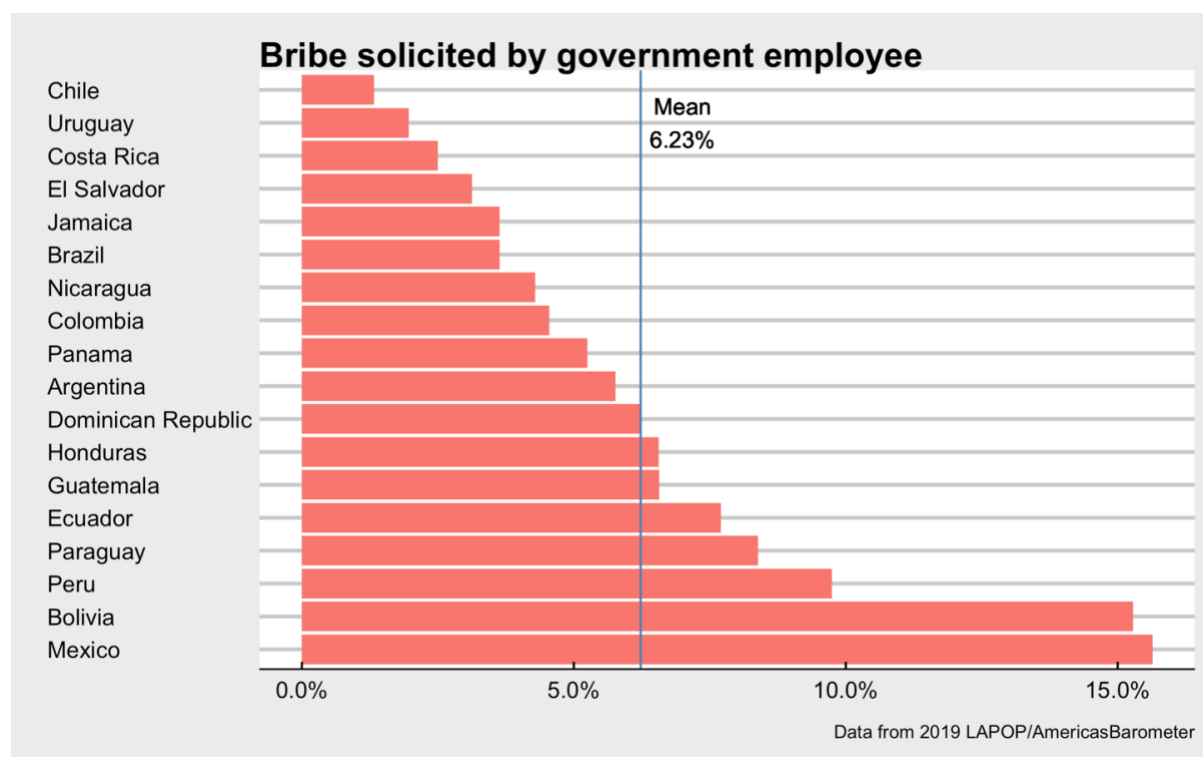
victimization by public officials is less frequent than by police forces, victimizing 6% of the population across Latin America¹⁰. Once again, corruption victimization varies significantly throughout the continent. Mexico and Bolivia present the highest victimization rates, with around 15% of reported victims while Uruguay and Chile show a rate of less than 2%.

Figure 4 - Bribe solicited by the police in Latin America



¹⁰ Latest UN statistics indicate that Latin America is comprised by 652 million people. Given that LAPOP surveys are nationally representative, we can infer that at least 39 million people were victims of corruption by government officials in Latin America. ["Overall total population" – World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision](#) (xlsx). population.un.org (custom data acquired via website). United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Retrieved June 1, 2021.

Figure 5 - Bribe solicited by government officials in Latin America



LAPOP also collects information on corruption on specific interactions with public services (in hospitals, in public schools, in courts, and at the municipal government), as shown in Table 1. The results reveal a great variation in corruption rates depending on the public services under analysis.

The average corruption rate on bribery when dealing with the municipal government (14.15%) is higher than the one among police officers (11.70%). Bolivia is an outlier, with more than 35% of respondents reporting being a corruption victim by a municipal officer (Figure 6). As for the judiciary system (Figure 7), Mexico presents the highest rate of victimization with 27% of respondents being victims of unsolicited bribery at a courthouse. On the other hand, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Brazil have the lowest victimization rates where less than 1% of interviewees reporting any bribery occurrence.

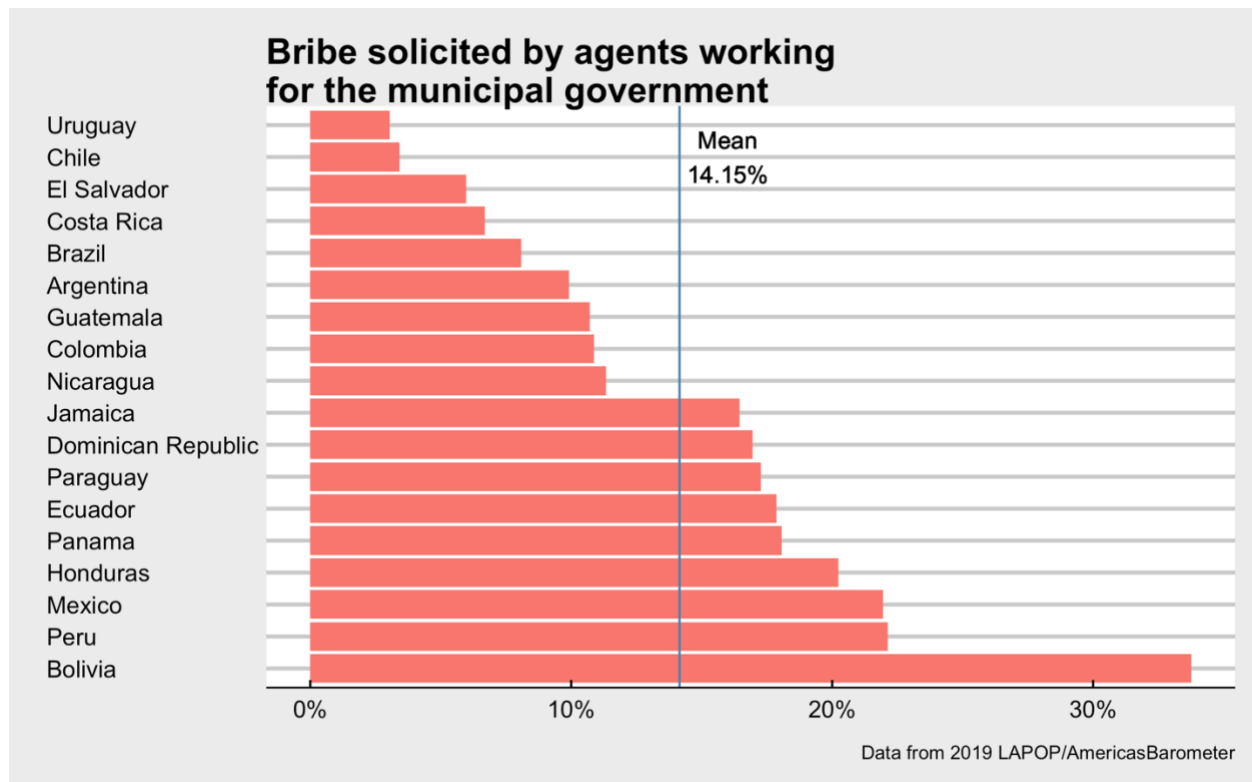
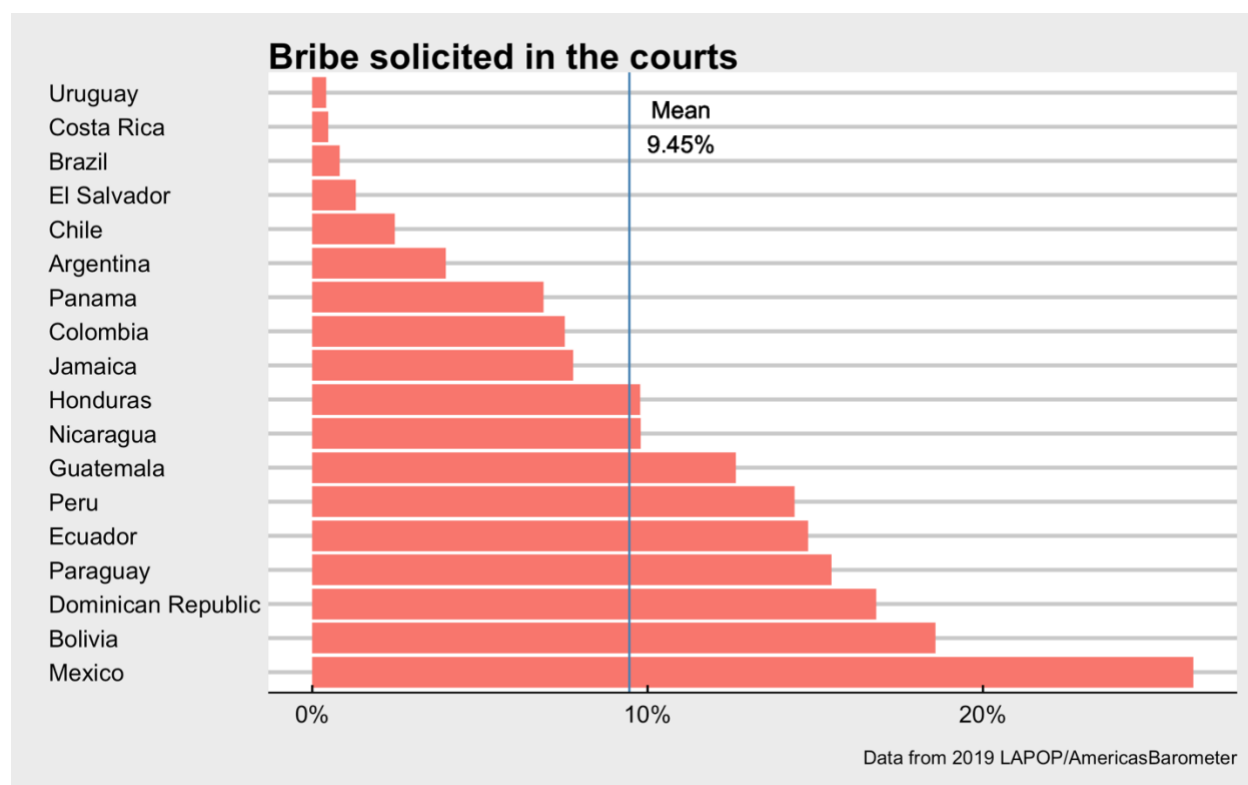
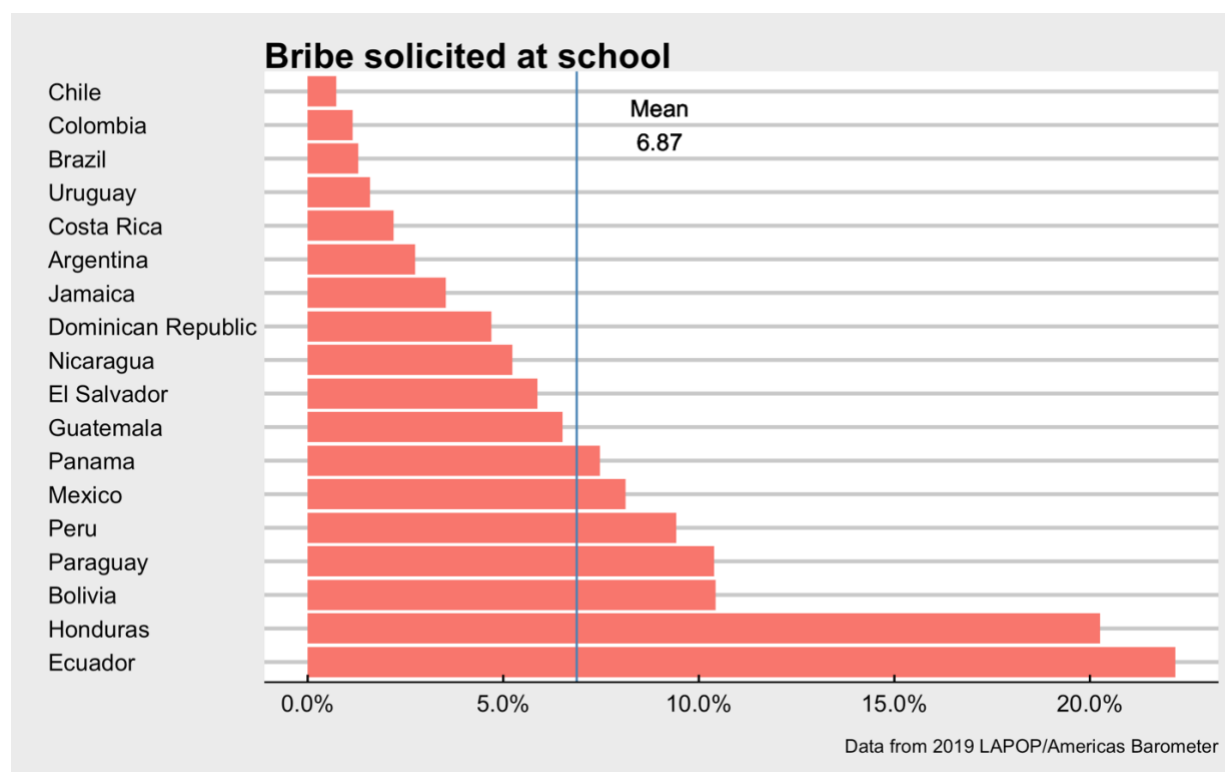
Figure 6 - Bribe solicited by municipal officers in Latin America

Figure 7 - Bribe solicited by agents working in the judiciary in Latin America



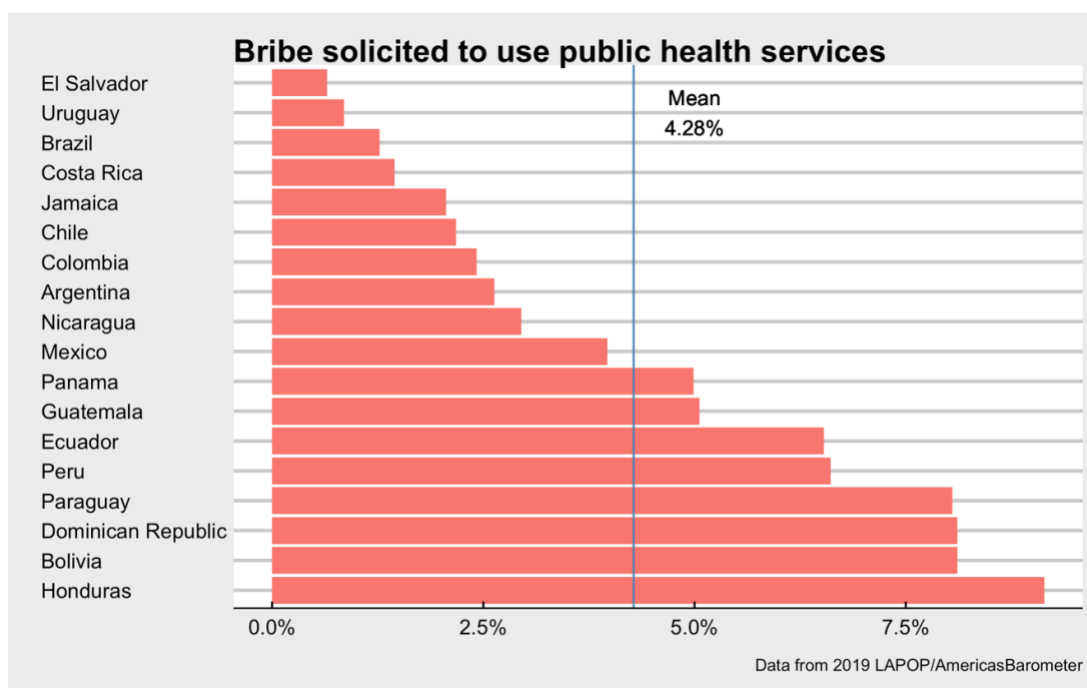
Bribes solicited in schools show that corruption in the public education sector is endemic in some countries and rare in others. Ecuador and Honduras present corruption victimization rates that are two times higher than the Latin America average of 6.87% while Chile, Colombia, and Brazil report rates of less than 1.5% on average among their population.

Figure 8 - Bribes solicited in schools in Latin America

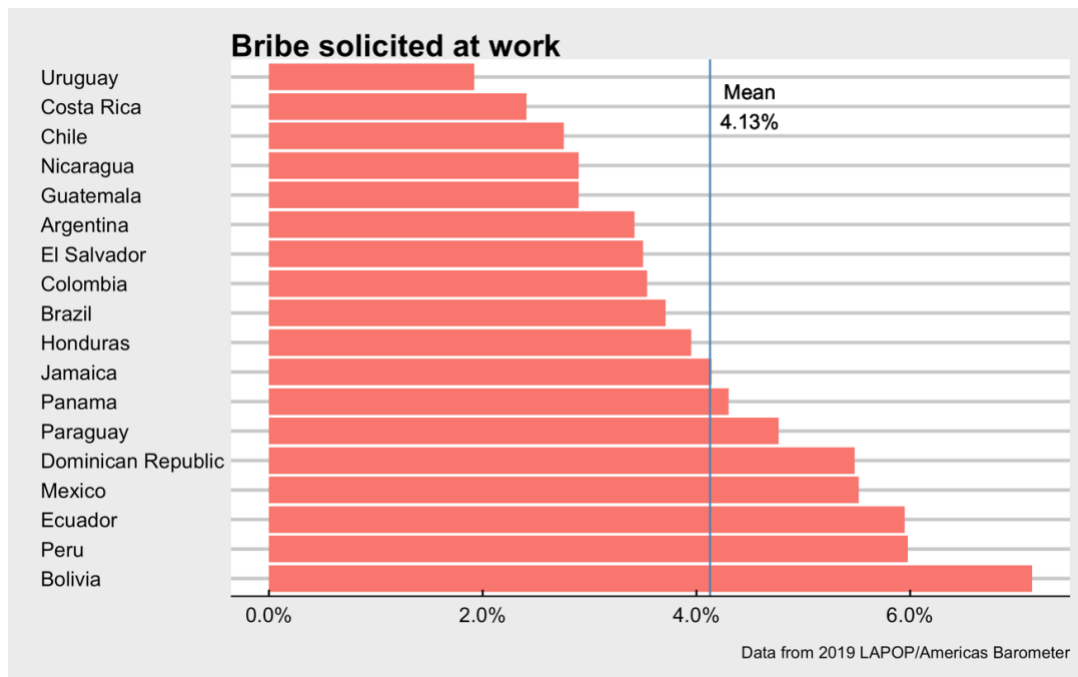


The health sector is the last public segment evaluated by LAPOP (Figure 9). In this one, corruption is less frequent than in the judiciary or in schools, and variation among countries is also lower. On average, 4.3% of Latin Americans were solicited bribes to have access to health services, and Honduras, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay are the countries where corruption in this sector is most frequent.

Figure 9 - Bribe solicited in public health units in Latin America



Lastly, LAPOP assesses how frequent corruption is at the workplace. Compared to the previous figures, which covered different public sectors, corruption at work presents a lower rate of victimization on average (4.13%). It indicates that corruption in the private sector is not as common as in the public service.

Figure 10 - Bribe solicited at work

Summary of descriptive statistics

In a nutshell, corruption in Latin America is widespread, but levels of victimization vary widely among countries depending on the public sector. Some public services control corruption better than others as is the case of hospitals and clinics, with the lowest rate of victimization on average, while the security sector presents rampant victimization rates. However, an overall pattern remains: those who need the public sector more frequently are more likely to be victimized by it. This seems to be a frivolous truism until one starts reflecting on the impact this vicious cycle may have on democracies. As Latin Americans become corruption victims vis-à-vis their interactions with their governments, their trust in political settings where citizenship is exercised may be damaged, such as elections, but not limited to it.

METHOD

This paper estimates the causal impact of individual-level corruption victimization on electoral alienation. Specifically, I test the hypothesis that individuals who report recent corruption victimization will be less engaged in the electoral process in their countries than non-victims. The most parsimonious regression model,

$$DV_{ElecAlien} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{victim} + \beta_2 x_{male} + \beta_3 x_{income} + \beta_4 x_{age} + \beta_5 x_{educ} + \beta_6 x_{urban} + \beta_7 x_{PolitInter} + \epsilon$$

includes only the respondent's sex (*male*), economic status (*income*), age in years (*age*), level of education (*educ*), urbanization (*urban*), and level of political interest (*PolitInter*). Given the binary nature of my dependent variable, I employ a linear probability model (LPM) which includes country-fixed effects, with robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

To measure corruption victimization, I create a dummy variable which is coded 1 if the respondent said they had experienced corruption in the last 12 months in any of the categories listed in Table 1 (i.e paying a bribe to a police officer, to a government employee, to a municipal agent, etc.). Conversely, victim is coded as 0 if the respondent said they did not experience any type of corruption in the past 12 months. This procedure allowed the study to deal with underreporting and inconsistencies in respondents' answers. In a preliminary analysis, the data showed that 1648 respondents who were victims of corruption by the police did not report being a victim of corruption by a government employee. This means that respondents may not have a clear understanding of what a public official is¹¹.

¹¹ This inconsistency was also noted in previous studies using older versions of LAPOP surveys (see Canache (2016)).

For electoral engagement, a dummy variable was also created based on whether respondents would cast a valid vote in the ballot box. Valid votes function as a proxy for electoral engagement while invalid votes and absenteeism represent electoral alienation. In 2019 LAPOP, respondents were asked what they would do if the next presidential elections were held next week. They had four options: a) Wouldn't vote; b) Would vote for the incumbent candidate or party; c) Would vote for a candidate or party different from the current administration; or d) Would go to vote but would leave the ballot blank or would purposely cancel their vote. My dependent variable is coded 1 if the respondent would vote either for the incumbent or the opposition, and zero otherwise (null and blank vote, as well as not going to vote). A description of all variables used in this regression model can be found in the appendix.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Table 3 reports the victimization coefficients from a linear probability model (LPM) for Latin America, considering the survey design.¹² Model 1 presents the most parsimonious regression results while models 2 and 3 control for respondents' level of information, and corruption perception.

The coefficients on corruption victimization are all negative and statistically significant. This means that having been a victim of corruption is associated with less electoral engagement and shows that direct exposure to corruption can lead individuals to withdraw from the electoral process. On average and holding all confounding variables constant, corruption victims are 2.8 percentage points more alienated from the electoral process in Latin America. This result is

¹² A comparison among a linear probability model, a probit generalized probability model, and a logit generalized probability model can be found in the appendix.

powerful and shows that the negative effect of corruption on citizens' propensity to cast a valid vote in the ballot box is three times greater than the positive effect that three years of education may have on individuals.

As for the control variables, men tend to politically engage in elections more than women, a result also found in Seligson's (2006) study on selected countries in Latin America. Table 3 reveals that age is also another important variable as older individuals tend to be more involved in the electoral process than younger individuals. Education and income levels also play a role, since higher levels of education and higher income tend to make a person more likely to effectively participate in elections. For income level, some scholars argue that poor individuals, because of the pressures they face to meet basic needs, are less likely to have the time or inclination to engage with political issues in comparison to members of the upper classes (Morris & Blake, 2009).

Lastly, interest in politics is also an important predictor of electoral alienation among victims and non-victims. LAPOP asks respondents to which extent they are interested in politics, ranging from “None” (coded as zero) to “A lot” (coded as 1). Individuals who are more interested in politics tend to cast a valid vote during election day.

Table 3 - Core Regression Results - Linear Probability Model

Regression Results			
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Electoral Engagement		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.028*** (0.008)	-0.027*** (0.008)	-0.026*** (0.008)
Male (d)	0.016*** (0.006)	0.017*** (0.006)	0.018*** (0.006)
Urban (d)	-0.032*** (0.008)	-0.034*** (0.008)	-0.033*** (0.008)
Age	0.003*** (0.0002)	0.003*** (0.0002)	0.003*** (0.0002)
Income	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.009*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.430*** (0.009)	0.421*** (0.009)	0.419*** (0.009)
News consumption		0.109*** (0.013)	0.111*** (0.013)
Corruption Perception			-0.064*** (0.020)
Constant	0.349*** (0.020)	0.284*** (0.022)	0.300*** (0.023)
Observations	21,815	21,815	21,815

Note:

* p ** p *** p<0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by the municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions are estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

To address previous findings on the relationship between individual-level knowledge on current events and electoral alienation reported in this study's literature review (Carreras & Vera, 2018; Chong et al., 2015; Escaleras et al., 2012; Inman & Andrews, 2008), as well as to isolate the actual effect of corruption experience from corruption perception (Dahlberg & Solevid, 2016; Školník, 2020), I have also included the individual level of news information and corruption perception in models 2 and 3 on Table 3 above.

In 2019 LAPOP, corruption perception is measured through two items, each one asked randomly to half of the respondents. The first one asks “taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is very common, common, uncommon, or very uncommon?” while the second one asks “thinking of the politicians of [country]... how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption?”. After analyzing each variable separately and finding similar results, I created a new variable that gathers both perceptions, creating a more representative sample. Both variables are rescaled from 0 to 1, being zero the lowest perception of corruption and 1 the highest. As for consumption of news information, LAPOP 2019 asks “About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet?”. Interviewees had five options that were recoded for this study as 1 (Daily) to zero (Never)¹³.

As expected, individuals who seek more information on daily events, regardless of the media platform (TV, internet, radio), tend to be less alienated from elections. Corruption perception, on the other hand, has a negative effect statistically significant on electoral

¹³ The description of all variables in the original dataset as well as their adaptations for this study, including how they were coded, can be found in the Appendix.

engagement, showing that the more corrupt a country is perceived by its nationals, the less they tend to seek change through the electoral process. Additionally, a collinearity test was conducted between corruption perception and corruption victimization. The Pearson correlation coefficient was very small (0.008), showing that there is no exact linear relationship between these two independent variables, and corruption perception and corruption victimization are measuring two distinct phenomena. The results on model 3 reveal that people who never encountered corruption may perceive this problem as widespread and severe in their country or region, and collective judgments - not just a person's own experiences - influence individuals' assessment of national corruption (Canache et al., 2019).

ADDRESSING THREATS TO CAUSAL INFERENCE

This section describes a series of robustness tests conducted to test the soundness of this article's research design, including reverse causation, endogeneity with the use of an instrumental variable, municipality effects based on a matching technique, and the effect of differences in electoral systems and prior electoral participation. A placebo test as well as tests with data from LAPOP's previous years are also conducted.

Reverse causality

Empirical studies, such as the present article, must determine the direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables to rule out the possibility of reverse causation (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). In this study, the chance that is actually electoral engagement that affects the odds of being a victim of corruption, rather than corruption victimization causing more electoral alienation. One of the advantages of our main LAPOP

variables is the timeline of events. We can eliminate the possibility of reverse causation as corruption victimization always happens before the survey assesses any intention to vote in a future presidential election.

Endogeneity

The analysis of this paper's core regression assumes that the impact of corruption victimization on electoral alienation is exogenous. However, a more critical reader may be suspicious that the effect of corruption on voter apathy is endogenous and therefore correlated to the error term due to omitted variable bias. That being the case, the reader may refute any causal inference between corruption victimization and electoral alienation for some reasons as follows.

Endogeneity may occur in this study for mainly two channels that may impact both the likelihood of being a crime victim and casting a valid vote in the ballot box. As I have noted previously, a conclusion from this article's descriptive analysis is that the likelihood of an individual be victimized is higher the more interactions this person has with the government. It may be the case that an individual may both avoid encounters with the government and going out to vote due to their personality. Secondly, this study's observational dataset, which represents only a snapshot of one point in time, may limit this article's ability to identify all confounding variables that affect both the main independent variable and the dependent variable. Therefore, there may be other unobserved mechanisms that act as confounders.

To address endogeneity concerns, I conduct a two-stage least square regression (2SLS) with the use of an instrumental variable from the 2019 LAPOP dataset – the same dataset used for this article's core regression - that measures for how many days a week respondents receive

water from the water piping/public water line. Respondents could choose among six options, ranging from zero (less than once a week) to 6 (seven days a week).

I believe this variable satisfies the criteria for applying an instrumental variable technique because it is both relevant and valid. The instrument is relevant because water is of high importance to any respondent. As a basic public service, it is plausible to believe that respondents with fewer water services will feel compelled to seek solutions with the government to resume the water distribution on an improved and consistent basis. This means that these respondents will likely have more interactions with their government, increasing their odds of being victimized. Empirically, this variable is highly correlated to corruption victimization (F statistic = 69.80, significant at the $p < .01$ level).

Secondly, I argue that water distribution meets the exclusion restriction of affecting electoral alienation only through corruption victimization for some reasons. It is unlikely that water distribution affects electoral alienation directly, but the effect that water availability on individuals' needs to interact with their governments is a channel for corruption victimization that may impact electoral behavior in national elections. Secondly, water distribution can be treated as an exogenous variable as it is not dependent on individual choices or behavior. Figure 11 below illustrates my assumption for using water provision as an instrumental variable for corruption victimization.

Figure 11 - Instrumental Variable Model

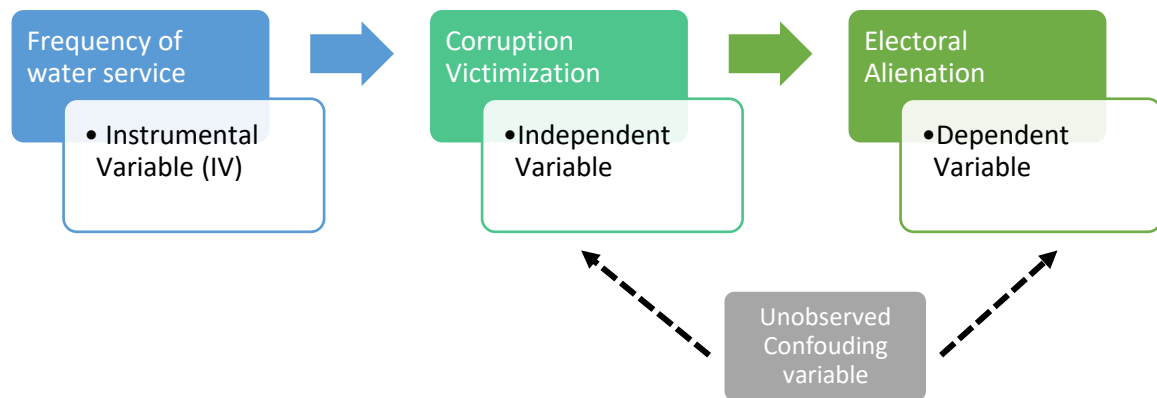


Table 4 reports the results from the instrumental variable regression model (2SLS). The first stage model, assessing corruption victimization, includes our measure for the respondent's access to water service per day, while the second stage models electoral alienation. The results are interesting and, as expected, the more water service received, the less likely the individual will experience corruption (coef. -0.008, significant at the $p < .01$ level). This highlights this pervasive relationship between interactions with the government and petty corruption. Secondly, the second stage model also indicates that after controlling for endogeneity caused by omitted variables bias, the relationship between corruption victimization and electoral alienation is still negative and statistically significant (coef. -0.419, significant at the $p < .01$ level). To illustrate the magnitude of the relationship between corruption victimization and electoral alienation, this instrumental variable regression reported in Table 4 is repeated with a bivariate probit model rather than 2SL2, and the results are similar, negative and statistically significant (coef. - 0.0121, significant at the $p < .01$ level). This suggests that the causal arrow flows primarily from corruption victimization to electoral alienation rather than the other way around.

Table 4 - Two-Stage Least Square Results using an Instrumental Variable

Two-stage least square (2SL2)		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	First stage	Second Stage
	(1)	(2)
Water Distribution (DV = Corruption Victimization)	-0.008*** (0.002)	
Corruption Victim (d)		-0.417** (0.204)
Male (d)	0.090*** (0.006)	0.054*** (0.020)
Age	-0.001*** (0.0002)	0.002*** (0.0003)
Years of Education	0.004*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.041*** (0.008)	0.451*** (0.013)
Constant	0.334*** (0.019)	0.452*** (0.064)
Observations	18,189	18,189
R ²	0.078	0.056
F Statistic	69.806*** (df = 22; 18166)	

Note:

* ** *** p<0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported. Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Matching Estimates

Can the location of corruption victims impact not only their odds of being victimized but also their level of electoral engagement? Some scholars argue that in municipalities with an undeveloped or underdeveloped political culture, accountability and legitimacy are usually low

and principles of ethics in government are not well-established (Saarimaa & Tukiainen, 2016).

As these practices may encourage corruption, living in these municipalities may affect the likelihood of citizens becoming a corruption victim. At the same time, local political culture and size of municipality may affect individuals voting behavior, making the municipality a confounding variable¹⁴. As we saw from the core regressions in this study in Table 3, it seems that voters who have been concentrated in urban centers often feel more disenfranchised and are less interested in voting. To reduce bias on the causal effect of corruption victimization on electoral engagement that may come from unobservable confounding variables owing to the locality of individuals, this study employs a robustness test with a matched-sampling technique.

The use of Matching allows me to evaluate the effect of the treatment (corruption victimization) by comparing treated individuals (victims) and non-treated individuals (non-victims). More specifically, this statistical method pairs for every victim with one or more non-victims with similar or exact characteristics that are deemed to be critical for this causal relationship, thus creating counterfactuals for the individuals in the opposite group and reduce bias due to confounding (Sekhon, 2009). Unpaired units are then dropped from the matched sample. For this study, both exact matching and nearest-neighbor matching is employed. The latter means that it runs through the list of treated units and selecting the closest eligible control unit to be paired with each treated unit (Ho et al., 2011). This mixed approach is done to balance

¹⁴ A shortcoming of LAPOP surveys is that the municipality size variable is not comparable among countries. LAPOP gather cities according to what is considered a small, medium, or big city in each country; for instance, in Brazil, LAPOP considers a small city as those with less than 50,000 citizens while in Guatemala this number is 25,000. In addition, unobservable variables related to political culture are subjective and difficult to measure.

a need for similar samples of victims and non-victims and to ensure as many individuals as possible are matched.

The results below draw from data that has been culled after exact matching on municipality; and nearest-neighbor matching on age, gender, education, income, and interest in politics. The results are consistent with the ones found in the core multiple regressions in Table 3, and corruption victimization is associated with less electoral engagement (- 0.023), significant at the $p < .01$ level. This rules out the possibility of unobservable confounding variables derived from respondents' municipalities to be responsible for the negative relationship between corruption victimization and electoral engagement.

Table 5 - Matching Results

Regression Results based on Matching Methods	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Electoral Engagement
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.023** (0.009)
Male (d)	0.015** (0.007)
Urban (d)	-0.027*** (0.008)
Age	0.002*** (0.0002)
Income	0.005*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.007*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.306*** (0.012)
Constant	0.397*** (0.023)
Observations	18,104

R^2	0.075
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<i>Note:</i>	* p ** p *** p < 0.01
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Mandatory Voting

Another potential threat to causal inference between corruption victimization and electoral alienation is the potential confounding effect of compulsory voting. In Latin America, applying legal sanctions to voting-age adults for their electoral absenteeism is still a common practice, which may include the prohibition to study in a public university, having access to a passport, or working for the government. Previous research has found that invalid ballots are higher when voters are required to vote by strict and enforced compulsory voting laws (Power and Garand, 2007). Similarly, it may be possible that those who would not otherwise vote are more concerned about corruption and, therefore, are more resistant to unsolicited bribery, being less prone to corruption victimization. In this case, compulsory voting could enforce voter participation which would not otherwise exist. To overcome this issue, I create a dummy variable for the electoral system where countries with mandatory voting are coded as 1 and those with voluntary participation are coded as zero. This classification takes into account whether voting was mandatory in the year of the last presidential election in each country for the year referred to in the 2019 LAPOP survey. This electoral systems' information is drawn from V-Dem Dataset, version 11.1, a dataset for 202 countries with political information from 1789 to 2020¹⁵.

The results controlling for the electoral system are also consistent with the ones in Table 3 for this study main regression, and corruption victimization is always associated with less

¹⁵ V-Dem Dataset v11.1” Varieties of Democracy Project is available on <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds21>

electoral engagement, regardless of the nature of suffrage across Latin American countries. The coefficient for corruption victimization (- 0.027, $p < .001$) remains unchanged. Interestingly, countries with mandatory voting are associated with less electoral engagement, meaning that citizens are more likely to cast an invalid vote in the ballot box or simply not going to vote when the system imposes any sanctions for non-participation.

Table 6 - LPM controlling for electoral system

Regression Results	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Electoral Engagement
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.027*** (0.008)
Mandatory voting (d)	-0.136*** (0.025)
Male (d)	0.018*** (0.006)
Urban (d)	-0.036*** (0.008)
Age	0.003*** (0.0002)
Income	0.005*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.007*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.423*** (0.009)
News consumption	0.109*** (0.013)
Constant	0.286*** (0.022)
Observations	22,271

Note: *** $p < 0.01$
 Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.
 Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.
 Regressions estimated in R 1.2.
 Variables followed by d are dummies.

Controlling for Prior Political Participation

The corruption victimization variable used in this paper reveals victimization within the past 12 months. To ensure that this article's findings are not merely a reflection of the respondent's level of electoral engagement prior to any recent corruption victimization, I also control for the respondents' electoral engagement more than 12 months before they were surveyed. LAPOP includes questions that ask interviewees how they have voted in the last presidential election. Excluding those countries that held elections in the 12 months prior to when the surveys were conducted in each country, this study can control for previctimization engagement in the electoral process. As we can see below, when past electoral engagement is introduced in the LPM regressions, the corruption victimization coefficient remains negative and statistically significant at the 0.001 level, and the coefficient for the impact of victimization on electoral alienation is slightly higher than the ones reported in the main regression in Table 3 (-0.032). Lastly, I have also tested the core regression model by excluding those who did not vote in the last presidential election, and the effect is still negative and statistically significant (coefficient -0.035, $p < 0.01$)¹⁶.

¹⁶ For detailed information, see the Appendix.

Table 7 - LPM Results controlling for prior political participation

Regression Results	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Electoral Engagement
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.032*** (0.010)
Non-voters (d)	-0.191*** (0.010)
Male (d)	0.022*** (0.007)
Urban (d)	-0.025*** (0.009)
Age	0.001*** (0.0003)
Income	0.004*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.005*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.392*** (0.011)
Corruption perception	-0.049** (0.024)
News Consumption	0.106*** (0.016)
Constant	0.339*** (0.026)
Observations	15,009

Note:

* p < 0.1
** p < 0.05
*** p < 0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Placebo Test: Prior electoral engagement and corruption victimization

To test the robustness of the core regressions results in Table 3, a placebo test¹⁷ was conducted. Placebo tests examine the effect of an intervention on a post-treatment variable known to be unaffected by the cause of interest, based on the same logic and preconditions as the primary test. Should the intervention show a statistically significant correlation with the placebo outcome, then the validity of the research design may be flawed (Hartman & Hidalgo, 2018)

The dependent variable for this placebo test relies on information provided by LAPOP on how respondents voted in the last presidential election. This variable was dichotomized and coded as 1 if the respondent voted for any candidate in the last election and 0 if the respondent voted blank, null, or did not go to vote. I also exclude respondents who had just achieved their legal voting age as they were not able to vote in last previous elections. Multiple regression for this falsification test also includes all control variables described in the most parsimonious regression model in Model 1, Table 3.

If corruption victimization has a negative effect on electoral engagement as shown in this article's core regressions, then recent corruption victimization should not predict voters' past electoral behavior. As past electoral engagement preceded corruption victimization, finding a statistically significant association between these two variables would violate the assumption that corruption victimization is the cause of electoral alienation, my main outcome of interest.

LAPOP data show that recent crime victimization had no statistically significant relationship with the likelihood that an individual casted a valid voted in the last national

¹⁷ Placebo test is also called refutability tests, falsification tests, balance tests, tests for known effects, tests of unconfoundedness, tests with negative controls.

elections (coefficient = 0.012, $p = 0.10$). We can be confident in this study research design, and more specifically, in the direction of this study causal relationship.

Table 8 - Placebo Test - Corruption victimization and prior electoral participation

Regression Results	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Casting a valid vote in the last presidential election
Corruption Victim (d)	0.012 (0.010)
Male (d)	-0.024*** (0.007)
Urban (d)	-0.053*** (0.010)
Age	0.008*** (0.0003)
Income	0.004*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.005*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.196*** (0.011)
Constant	0.148*** (0.026)
Observations	13,015

Note:

* ** *** $p < 0.01$

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Countries that held presidential elections in the 12 months preceding the survey were not included

Similar results irrespective of public sector

Would corruption victimization increase electoral alienation regardless of where corruption occurred? Instead of analyzing the effect of the general victimization variable in this article's core regression, I test this hypothesis and I found that direct experience with corruption through all forms of everyday interactions with the government increases voter apathy. As presented in Table 1, LAPOP includes separate variables to assess corruption victimization in diverse public sectors; that is, if a person had to pay a bribe to the police, to a municipal employee, to any government official, in a school, in a hospital, and in a courthouse. For each public setting, I create six different dummy variables coded as 1 if the respondent had to pay any bribes in the last 12 months and zero for individuals who did not experience corruption in the last 12 months. These multiple regressions are run independently and considering only individuals who provided valid answers to each bribery experience. Similar to the core regression model, our main dependent variable is electoral engagement, which is the likelihood of a respondent to cast a valid vote in the next national elections. A positive result means more electoral engagement whereas a negative result means more electoral alienation.

In Table 8 below, our six linear probability models show that corruption victimization is associated with more electoral alienation. Corruption victims, irrespective of where corruption took place, are less likely to engage in the electoral process and cast a valid vote in the next national elections. Victimization at the workplace, a court, or a hospital or clinic exert the highest impact on alienation, three times more than the effect found in our general victimization results in Table 3 (-0.028 compared to -0.079, -0.074, and -0.069), all coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These findings corroborate my understanding that corruption

victimization has a negative individual-level effect on electoral engagement, pushing victims away from the electoral process through absenteeism or invalid voting.

Table 9 - Corruption Victimization in different sectors

Regression Results - Corruption Victimization in Different Sectors and Electoral Engagement						
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Electoral Engagement					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Police (d)	-0.026*** (0.010)					
Government Employee (d)		-0.018 (0.013)				
Public Health (d)			-0.074*** (0.020)			
Judiciary (d)				-0.069** (0.034)		
School (d)					-0.043** (0.020)	
Work (d)						-0.079*** (0.020)
Male (d)	0.019*** (0.006)	0.017*** (0.006)	0.017** (0.008)	-0.011 (0.018)	0.032*** (0.010)	0.020** (0.009)
Urban (d)	-0.036*** (0.008)	-0.036*** (0.008)	-0.038*** (0.010)	-0.047* (0.025)	-0.036*** (0.012)	-0.030*** (0.010)
Age	0.003*** (0.0002)	0.003*** (0.0002)	0.002*** (0.0003)	0.001* (0.001)	0.004*** (0.0005)	0.003*** (0.0003)
Income	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.005** (0.002)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.007*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.004* (0.003)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.423*** (0.009)	0.423*** (0.009)	0.422*** (0.013)	0.363*** (0.026)	0.433*** (0.014)	0.410*** (0.012)
News Consumption	0.110*** (0.013)	0.110*** (0.013)	0.072*** (0.020)	0.124*** (0.043)	0.076*** (0.021)	0.108*** (0.018)
Constant	0.283***	0.279***	0.370***	0.360***	0.296***	0.234***

	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.066)	(0.035)	(0.029)
Observations	22,229	22,252	11,606	2,462	8,882	12,476

Note: * p ** p *** p<0.01
 Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.
 Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.
 Regressions estimated in R 1.2.
 Variables followed by d are dummies.

Similar results for previous years

Cross-sectional studies may present powerful results but are limited to a single specific time frame. In this article, the 2019 LAPOP dataset captures respondents' political attitudes in a single year, raising questions on whether a causal relationship would also be found in previous years. To circumvent this pitfall, I have tested the core regression model presented in Table 3 using previous LAPOP surveys for all 18 countries under analysis. LAPOP has been consistent over the years and survey questions of interest were not changed in 2016 and 2014, allowing precise comparability. As we can see in the table below, the results are the same: corruption victims are less likely to cast a valid vote during election time, being more alienated from the electoral process (coef. -.040 in 2016, p <0.01 in 2016, and coef. -0.035, p <0.01 in 2014).

Table 10 - LPM Results using LAPOP previous surveys

Regression Results		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Electoral Engagement	
	LAPOP 2016	LAPOP 2014
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.040*** (0.010)	-0.035*** (0.008)
Male (d)	0.018**	0.003

	(0.008)	(0.006)
Urban (d)	-0.039***	-0.043***
	(0.009)	(0.007)
Age	0.003***	0.002***
	(0.0003)	(0.0002)
Income	0.004***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Years of Education	0.004***	-0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.436***	0.404***
	(0.012)	(0.009)
Constant	0.271***	0.572***
	(0.025)	(0.021)
Observations	13,649	25,418

Note:

* p < 0.1
 ** p < 0.05
 *** p < 0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

LIMITATIONS

This section aims to discuss some of the limitations identified in this study owing to the observational nature of the LAPOP dataset as well as to response bias related to the illicit nature of corruption.

Serial victimization

LAPOP surveys provide cross-country information on a single point in time; therefore, it does not account for experiences with corruption in previous years nor repeated victimization in the same public setting in a single year. A person who has reported being a victim of corruption in the past 12 months of the survey, holding constant all confounding variables, may have been a

victim of corruption before. Given the absence of information about serial victimization, it is impossible to assess whether the effect presented in this study's core regressions is the reflection of a short-term effect or the cumulative effect of previous and current experiences with corruption. A venue for future research is certainly the availability of individual-level panel data to control for serial victimization as well as a series of demographic changes in the population.

Response bias due to a hypothetical scenario

Similar to election polling or opinion polls, LAPOP relies on a hypothetical scenario to assess how respondents would behave in a future presidential election. This presents some limitations to extrapolate this study's results to a real case-scenario for some reasons. First, the political scenario may not be clearly defined for respondents at the time of the survey for them to reflect on the existing candidates and decide how to vote. Previous research has shown that “closely fought elections stimulate mobilization efforts and magnify media coverage, all of which ultimately spur citizens’ perception that their vote matters” (Katz & Levin, 2018), reducing expected absenteeism and invalid voting. But some respondents may be apathetic to future elections when they will only happen a year from now. Secondly, individual hypothetical behavior may be different from the day of election, when campaigns have worked intensely to mobilize voters. Given the limitations of LAPOP data, further research should address the actual vote choice of corruption-victimised voters to unpack this potential mechanism that links victimization and electoral alienation.

Response bias due to the nature of corruption

Some respondents may refuse to answer questions related to corruption victimization to avoid being implicated in an illegal act, generating a response bias due to the nature of corruption. For some victimization scenarios, LAPOP asks whether the respondent actually paid a bribe to receive a public service, as in the example “Did you have to pay a bribe to the courts in the last twelve months?”. This may imply a consensual crime, of which reporting to the authorities benefits neither the corruptor nor the corruptee, as in some countries the victim, by accepting to pay a bribe, may be legally sanctioned (Huisman & Vande Walle, 2010). In addition, victims may have contradictory behaviors on corruption, “exhibiting bribery-supporting behavior even though they may at the same time express an intrinsic disagreement with the whole idea behind bribery. In other words, a citizen’s evaluation of low-level corruption may be negative, but other factors beyond a citizen’s sentiments also come into play when confronted with a real situation”. (Pozsgai Alvarez, 2015). If victims feel that there is a subjective norm in which others expect a refusal to pay bribes irrespective of the individual situation, victims may hide their victimization status due to legal and moral concerns, resulting in biased estimators.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CORRUPTION VICTIMIZATION FOR DEMOCRACY

So far we have seen that corruption victimization enhances electoral alienation, showing that voters may perceive themselves as powerless to change the political scenario through strategic voting. Would this electoral discontentment affect how they feel about the entire political system? Seligson’s (2002; 2006) study for selected countries in Latin America has shown that corruption victims are less likely to respect and trust their country’s political

institutions, such as the police, the courts and their ability to guarantee a fair trial, and the political system. Similarly, Bateson's (2012) seminal study on crime victimization and political participation shows that victims of crime, either violent or non-violent ones, are more supportive of *mano dura* policies and authoritarian measures¹⁸. Would corruption lead to a similar trend in which victims are more supportive of authoritarianism instead of democracy?

I test this hypothesis by utilizing two questions asked to LAPOP's respondents regarding their political views as my dependent variables. 2019 LAPOP asks respondents "Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified when there is a lot of corruption?". Respondents could agree that a military take-over of the state would be justified or disagree that a military coup would be justified. For this study, this dichotomous variable was coded as 1 if the respondent strongly agrees with a military coup and zero if the respondent disagrees.

Secondly, LAPOP asks respondents the following question "democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government...To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?". Respondents were given a scale of 1 if they strongly disagree and 7 if they strongly agree. For this study's linear probability model, this variable was rescaled to 0 if the respondent strongly disagrees and 1 if the respondent strongly agrees.

The independent variable is the same binary variable as in the core regression represented in Table 3— corruption victimization. The same control variables were also included.

¹⁸ Bateson (2012) variable for crime victimization does not include corruption victimization.

As we can see below, the linear probability model in Table 9 reveals that corruption victims are 2.1 percentage points less likely to believe that democracy is the best form of government (-coef. 0.021, $p < .001$) and 7.1 percentage points more likely to justify a military coup when corruption is seen as widespread (coef. 0.071, $p < .001$) compared to non-victims.

Table 11 - Corruption Victimization and Support for Democracy

	Regression Results	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Belief that democracy is the best form of government (1)	Belief that military coup is sometimes justified (2)
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.025*** (0.005)	0.072*** (0.012)
Male (d)	0.015*** (0.004)	-0.028*** (0.010)
Urban (d)	-0.017*** (0.005)	0.022* (0.011)
Age	0.002*** (0.0001)	-0.004*** (0.0003)
Income	0.004*** (0.0004)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.006*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.099*** (0.006)	-0.030** (0.014)
Constant	0.454*** (0.011)	0.668*** (0.027)
Observations	21,864	10,503

Note: * p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.
 Regressions estimated in R 1.2.
 Variables followed by d are dummies.

In a similar vein, discontentment with the political system, the perception that individuals are unable to change the political scenario, and a fraction in the legitimacy of democratic representation are also noted. When asked whether politicians take into account the opinions of their electorate, corruption victims in Latin America are 5.2 percentage points more likely to disagree. When it comes to tolerance of corruption, corruption victims are 12.4 percentage points more likely to feel resigned to accept paying a bribe on average, all confounding variables held constant¹⁹. These attitudinal indicators raise some questions on whether corruption victims are more likely to engage in future corruption transactions under certain environmental conditions and corruption transaction characteristics.

These findings demonstrate that there are real costs of corruption that can lead to political instability. Victims of corruption are more likely to question the regime's ability to formulate and implement successful policies and enforce the rule of law, undermining the political efficacy of Latin America's recent democracies (Linz, 1978). Aligned with an electoral disengagement effect, increasing support for an autocratic regime as a solution for structural problems show citizens' deep frustration with the political status quo in Latin America and the performance of public institutions. Rather than being more active in the fight against corruption, resignation among corruption victims may lead to an increasing bribery-supporting behavior, institutionalizing extortion on everyday interactions with the government. More worrisome is

¹⁹ Detailed results can be found in the Appendix.

that these findings may express an inclination among Latin Americans to see autocratic governance as a necessity for solving these problems, regardless of its repressive consequences on their freedom. A setback for a region that less than three decades ago transitioned away from military dictatorships.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to understand whether corruption victimization affects individual electoral alienation in Latin America. More specifically, I tested whether recent victims of petty corruption in 18 countries, through their everyday interactions with diverse government sectors, would be less likely to cast a valid vote in the next national elections.

This article's empirical results show that when citizens are victimized, they become more disenchanted about electoral life and, as a result, less likely to actively participate in the electoral process, the most important institutionalized venue for political change in democratic regimes. Victims of corruption, holding all the other confounding variables constant, are 2.8 percentage points less likely to cast a valid vote either to the incumbent or any opposition party or candidate; instead, they prefer not to vote or purposefully nullify their vote. Such withdrawal pattern is especially concerning in Latin America, where democratic transition is recent, and political institutions are still fragile. These findings become more concerning as this article's linear probability models reveal that corruption victims are 2.1percentage points less likely to support democracy as their preferred political system, and 7.8 percentage points more likely to support a coup when corruption is deemed as widespread. Compared to the other control variables, corruption victimization is the greatest predictor of support for a military dictatorship, nullifying the positive effect on democratic support of over 10 years of formal education.

This article contributes to the existing literature on corruption and electoral behavior and political legitimacy. To my knowledge, this is the first attempt to conduct a comparative study of 18 countries in the region measuring the effect of corruption on electoral alienation, controlling for endogeneity issues. This article intends to expand the existing knowledge on this theme beyond political corruption and corruption perception by analyzing individuals' real experiences with bribery. Moreover, it aimed to shed light on a dynamic still unexplored in academia: to what extent voter turnout, by considering invalid votes as effective participation, may overlook voter apathy and dissatisfaction with the political system? This article has shown that corruption increases electoral alienation and undermines political efficacy; that is, citizens' belief that their votes matter.

There are several venues for future research. Not only should future studies investigate the effects of corruption victimization on electoral alienation in other continents, but also on other forms of political participation. Frustrated with the political system, victims of corruption might develop apathy toward politicians and political institutions whereas this disgruntlement may be channeled to non-institutionalized forms of participation. It could be the case that citizens in corrupt countries become angered and furious with conventional channels of expression and turn to more radical forms of political action, such as demonstrations or boycotts. As mentioned in the introduction, political corruption revealed by Operation Car Wash fueled major protests in Brazil that ultimately led to Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016. Similarly in Bolivia, high levels of corruption victimization exerted a positive and substantively large impact on protest engagement in 2004 which led to a crisis of democracy (Gingerich, 2009).

Moreover, panel studies should be funded to measure the impact of corruption victimization over time, filling the existing gap in the literature regarding the effects of serial

victimization. Lastly, other dynamics should also be evaluated, namely, whether corruption victimization affects electoral alienation in non-national elections, such as provincial, municipal, and legislative polls.

As corruption undermines political stability and the strengthening of democracy, governments should design and implement policies and programs that mitigate the odds of victimization. Petty corruption can be tackled in many forms, and one of the most promising and cost-effective ways is by reducing the dependency on face-to-face interaction with local officials. Actions such as replacing corrupt officials with computers, promoting more open government, and offering citizens a choice between institutions delivering a service can help reduce bribery in service delivery (Rose, 2015). The design of anti-corruption policy and programs, based on robust evidence on this theme, has much to add to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America.

APPENDIX

2020 Scimago journal ranking in Political Science and International Relations

Referenced on page 14 of this article

Journal Title	SJR Index
American Journal of Political Science	6.347
American Political Science Review	5.878
International Organization	5.513
Political Analysis	3.953
British Journal of Political Science	3.364
Perspectives on Politics	2.898
Journal of Peace Research	2.781
Quarterly Journal of Political Science	2.757
International Security	2.690
Journal of Conflict Resolution	2.671

List of articles based on a search on IPSA's database

Referenced on page 14 of this article

Article Title	Author	Journal Title	ISSN	Publication Date
All in the Family: Partisan Disagreement and Electoral Mobilization in Intimate Networks- A Spillover Experiment.	Foos, Florian; de Rooij, Eline A.	American Journal of Political Science (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)	00925853	2017
Compulsory Voting and Income Inequality: Evidence for Lijphart's Proposition from Venezuela.	Carey, John M.; Horiuchi, Yusaku	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2017
Detecting Spillover Effects: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments.	Sinclair, Betsy; McConnell, Margaret; Green, Donald P.	American Journal of Political Science (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)	00925853	2012
Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement.	Kim, Jeong Hyun	American Journal of Political Science (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)	00925853	2019
Do Corrupt Politicians Mobilize or Demobilize Voters? A Vignette Experiment in Colombia.	Carreras, Miguel; Vera, Sofia	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2018
Electoral engineering and cross-national turnout differences: What role for compulsory voting?	Franklin, Mark N.	British Journal of Political Science	00071234	1999
Hooking Workers and Hooking Votes: Eganche, Suffrage, and Labor Market Dualism in Latin America.	Carnes, Matthew E.	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2014
Ideology in Context: Explaining Sendero Luminoso's Tactical Escalation.	Ron, James	Journal of Peace Research	00223433	2001
If You Mobilize Them, They Will Become Informed: Experimental Evidence that Information Acquisition Is Endogenous to Costs and Incentives to Participate.	Shineman, Victoria Anne	British Journal of Political Science	00071234	2018
Living in Gang-Controlled Neighborhoods: Impacts on Electoral and Nonelectoral Participation in El Salvador.	Córdova, Abby	Latin American Research Review	00238791	2019
Making Outsiders' Votes Count: Detecting Electoral Fraud through a Natural Experiment.	FUKUMOTO, KENTARO; HORIUCHI, YUSAKU	American Political Science Review	00030554	2011

Multi-Party Elections in the Arab World: Institutional Engineering and Oppositional Strategies.	Posusney, Marsha Peipstein	Studies in Comparative International Development	00393606	2002
Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour.	Karp, Jeffrey A.; Banducci, Susan A.	British Journal of Political Science	00071234	2008
Promoting Democracy in Fragile States: Field Experimental Evidence from Liberia.	Mvukiyehe, Eric; Samii, Cyrus	World Development	0305750X	2017
Revolution's Legacy: Residual Effects on Nicaraguan Participation and Attitudes in Comparative Context.	Booth, John A.; Richard, Patricia Bayer	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2006
Structure, behavior, and voter turnout in the United States.	Timpone, Richard J.	American Political Science Review	00030554	1998
Suffrage Extensions and Voting Patterns in Latin America: Is Mobilization a Source of Decay?	Kellam, Marisa	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2013
Taming the Tiger: Voting Rights and Political Instability in Latin America.	Colomer, Josep M.	Latin American Politics & Society	1531426X	2004
The Myth of the Vanishing Voter.	McDonald, Michael P.; Popkin, Samuel L.	American Political Science Review	00030554	2001
The road not taken: Gender gaps along paths to political power.	Iyer, Lakshmi; Mani, Anandi	World Development	0305750X	2019
To Vote or Not to Vote.	Ley, Sandra	Journal of Conflict Resolution	00220027	2018
Unrequited Moderation: Credible Commitments and State Repression in Egypt.	Brownlee, Jason	Studies in Comparative International Development	00393606	2010
Urbanization Patterns, Information Diffusion, and Female Voting in Rural Paraguay.	Chong, Alberto; León-Ciliotta, Gianmarco; Roza, Vivian; Valdivia, Martín; Vega, Gabriela	American Journal of Political Science (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)	00925853	2019
Using violence, seeking votes.	Matanock, Aila M.	Journal of Peace Research	00223433	2016

Descriptive Profile for Victims and Non-Victims

Referenced on page 25 of this paper.

Descriptive Profile for Victims and Non-Victims		
Variable	Mean of Victims	Mean of Non-Victims
Age in Years	37.24	39.91
Percent Male	63.50	48.15
Years of Education	10.68	9.99
Percent Married	29.03%	28.92%
Number of Children	1.23	1.04
Level of Urbanization	71.80% urban	72.96% urban
Income Level	2.38	2.27
Computer in Household	41.44%	40.17%
Owns Motorized Vehicle	30.17%	24.11%
Race	50% Mixed, 21.30% White, 7.90% Black, 7.86% Indigenous, 5.33% Mulatto	44.05% Mixed, 27.63% White, 10.07% Black, 6.74% Mulatto, 6.12% Indigenous

Survey questions that are used to construct the regressions

Variable	Question #	Variable Name in Manuscript	Variable Name in Regression Output	Question	Values	Type of variable
Independent variable						
Corruption victimization	EXC2	Victim1	Corruption Victim (d)	Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last twelve months?	No = 0 Yes = 1	Main independent variable
	EXC6			In the last twelve months, did any government employee ask you for a bribe?		
	EXC11			In the last twelve months, to process any kind of document in your municipal government, like a permit for example, did you have to pay any money above that required by law?		
	EXC13			In your work, have you been asked to pay a bribe in the last twelve months?		
	EXC14			Did you have to pay a bribe to the courts in the last twelve months?		
	EXC15			In order to be seen in a hospital or a clinic in the last twelve months, did you have to pay a bribe?		
	EXC16			Have you had to pay a bribe at school in the last twelve months?		
	Dependent variable					
Electoral Participation	vb20	Vote1	Electoral Engagement	If the next presidential elections were being held this week, what would you do?	Wouldn't vote = 0 Would go to vote but would leave the ballot/vote/ticket blank or would purposely cancel my vote = 0 Would vote for the current (incumbent) candidate or party = 1 Would vote for a candidate or	Main dependent variable

					party different from the current administration = 1	
Control variables						
Age	Q2	age	Age	How old are you?	Age cannot be less than 18 years, or 16 years for Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, and Nicaragua]	
Education	ED	years_school	Education	How many years of schooling have you completed?	0-15	
Income	Q10NEW	income	Income	And into which of the following ranges does the total monthly income of this household fit, including remittances from abroad and the income of all the working adults and children?	0 = No income 1 = Less than \$25 ...	
Gender	Q1	gender	Male (d)	Sex	Female = 0 Male = 1	
Region (urban or rural)	UR	zone	Urban(d)	-	Urban = 1 Rural = 0	
Political interest	Pol1	interest1	Interest in Politics	How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?	0 = None 0.33 = Some 0.66 = Little 1 = A lot	
Corruption perception	EXC7	perception1	Corruption perception	Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is	0 = very uncommon 0.33 = somewhat uncommon 0.66 = somewhat common 1 = very common	Confounding variable in Model 2
	EXC7new			Thinking of the politicians of [country]... how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption?	0 = None	

					0.25 = Less than half of them 0.50 = Half of them 0.75 = More than half of them 1 = All	
News Consumption	GI0N	News1	News Consumption	About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet?	1 = Daily 0 = Never	Confounding variable in Model 2
Variables for robustness tests						
Resignation towards bribery	EXC18	bribe_just	-	Do you think given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified?		
Past electoral engagement	VB2	past_election	Non-voters (d)	Did you vote in the last presidential elections of [year of last presidential election]		
Support for democracy	ING4	demo1	-	Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?	Originally, 1-7 (strongly disagree – strongly agree). Rescaled to 0 (strongly disagree) to 1 (strongly agree)	
Support for a Coup d'Etat	JC13	coup1	-	Now, changing the subject. Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified	1 = Yes, it would be justified 0 = No, it would not be justified	
Political efficacy	EFF1	efficacy1	-	Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?	0 = Strongly disagree 1 = strongly agree	
Water service per week (instrumental variable)	PSC7	water	-	How many days a week do you receive water from the water piping/public water line? (Asked only if there is water piping)	0 = Less than once a week 1 = One day a week 2 = Two days per week	Categorical variable with 6 categories, ranging from 0 to 1

					3 = Three days per week 4 = Four days per week 5 = Five days per week 6 = Six days per week 7= Seven days per week	
--	--	--	--	--	---	--

Regression Results only with those who voted in the last presidential election

Linear Probability Model Results, LAPOP 2019 Latin America

(The independent variable is corruption victimization in different public settings. The dependent variable is voting in the next national election).

Referenced on page 45 of the article.

Regression Results only with those who voted in the last presidential election

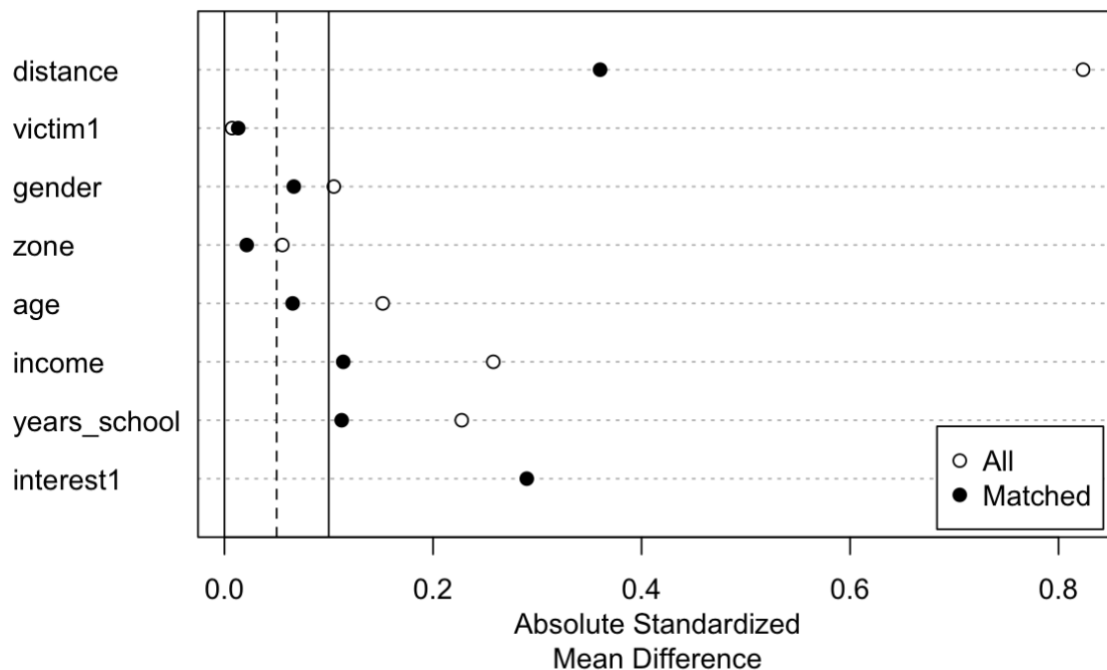
<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Electoral Engagement	
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.035*** (0.012)
Male (d)	0.029*** (0.009)
Urban (d)	-0.023** (0.011)
Age	0.001*** (0.0003)
Income	0.004*** (0.001)
Years of Education	0.005*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.350*** (0.012)
News consumption	0.108*** (0.020)

Corruption Perception	-0.076*** (0.028)
Constant	0.347*** (0.031)
Observations	10,686

Note: * ** *** $p < 0.01$
 Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.
 Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.
 Regressions estimated in R 1.2.
 Variables followed by d are dummies.
 Countries that held presidential elections in the last 12 months prior to the survey were excluded.

Balance for the Matching Specification Model, LAPOP 2019 Latin America

Referenced on page 41-42 of this paper



Linear Probability Model, Probit, and Logit Results, LAPOP 2019 Latin America

Referenced on page 35 of this paper

Regression Results			
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	LPM	Probit	Logit
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.028*** (0.008)	-0.082*** (0.024)	-0.135*** (0.040)
Mandatory voting (d)	0.017*** (0.006)	0.050*** (0.018)	0.086*** (0.030)
Male (d)	-0.034*** (0.008)	-0.102*** (0.022)	-0.167*** (0.036)
Urban (d)	0.003*** (0.0002)	0.009*** (0.001)	0.016*** (0.001)
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.027*** (0.003)
Income	0.008*** (0.001)	0.025*** (0.003)	0.043*** (0.004)
Years of Education	0.433*** (0.009)	1.263*** (0.030)	2.116*** (0.051)
Interest in Politics	0.351*** (0.020)	-0.452*** (0.064)	-0.773*** (0.108)
Observations	22,271	22,271	22,271

Note:

* ** *** p<0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.
Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Political Apathy and Corruption Victimization

Linear Probability Model Results, LAPOP 2019 Latin America

(The independent variable is corruption victimization. The dependent variable is scaled from zero – highly disagree - to 1 – highly agree).

Referenced on page 56 of the article.

Regression Results

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?	
Corruption Victim (d)	-0.052*** (0.006)
Male (d)	0.0003 (0.005)
Urban (d)	-0.023*** (0.006)
Age	0.0003** (0.0001)
Income	-0.003*** (0.001)
Years of Education	-0.008*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.084*** (0.007)
Constant	0.662*** (0.014)
Observations	22,236

Note:

* p ** p *** p<0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Resignation towards corruption

Linear Probability Model Results, LAPOP 2019 Latin America

Referenced on page 56 of this paper

Regression Results	
<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Do you think given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified?	
Corruption Victim (d)	0.124*** (0.007)
Male (d)	0.018*** (0.005)
Urban (d)	-0.001 (0.006)
Age	-0.003*** (0.0002)
Income	0.001 (0.001)
Years of Education	-0.002*** (0.001)
Interest in Politics	-0.007 (0.007)
Constant	0.253*** (0.016)
Observations	23,580

Note:

* p ** p *** p<0.01

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality are in parentheses.

Country fixed effects included although their coefficients are not reported.

Regressions estimated in R 1.2.

Variables followed by d are dummies.

Bivariate Probit Model

Referenced on page 45 of this article.

COPULA: Gaussian
MARGIN 1: Bernoulli
MARGIN 2: Bernoulli

EQUATION 1

Link function for mu.1: probit

Formula: victim1 ~ psc7 + factor(gender) + age + years_school + interest1

Parametric coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-0.751910	0.055771	-13.482	< 2e-16 ***
psc7	-0.055231	0.005818	-9.493	< 2e-16 ***
factor(gender)1	0.341516	0.022038	15.497	< 2e-16 ***
age	-0.005520	0.000716	-7.709	1.26e-14 ***
years_school	0.017861	0.002761	6.469	9.83e-11 ***
interest1	0.128288	0.031394	4.086	4.38e-05 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

EQUATION 2

Link function for mu.2: probit

Formula: vote1 ~ psc7 + factor(gender) + age + years_school + interest1

Parametric coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-0.8798088	0.0522484	-16.839	<2e-16 ***
psc7	-0.0121408	0.0055112	-2.203	0.0276 *
factor(gender)1	0.0423482	0.0196537	2.155	0.0312 *
age	0.0097547	0.0006361	15.336	<2e-16 ***
years_school	0.0300256	0.0025220	11.905	<2e-16 ***
interest1	1.2862046	0.0301273	42.692	<2e-16 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

n = 18189 theta = -0.0427(-0.072,-0.00991) tau = -0.0272(-0.0459,-0.00631)
total edf = 13

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