



PROJECT TITLE: COMMON KNOWLEDGE, RELATIVE PERFORMANCE AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVES: Rationalize mix evidence on the sanctioned incumbency in development contexts with a Bayesian simple model emphasizing beliefs and previous updates of voters.

PARTNERS & GRANTS: Experiments in Governance and Politics Network (EGAP) METAKETA Initiative - Harvard University - New York University – Borde Político

METHODOLOGY: Experimental Design.

DESCRIPTION: We argue that previous beliefs of voters can play a key role in rationalizing of mix results, and ultimately, help to explain when and how information on the performance of those in office influences participation and voting choice. Theory is supported by a field experiment that informs Mexican voters about corrupt majors' expenditures before municipal elections.

MAIN FINDINGS: In 678 electoral districts in 26 municipalities in 4 states in central Mexico, we randomized dissemination of pamphlets informing about audit results to up to 200 households in rural and urban areas before elections. Specifically, electoral punishment revealed that being corrupt is weird when voters already thought there was corruption, meanwhile, the effect of information on participation is non-linear to the magnitude of the revealed corruption.

Given the low expectations and uncertainty of the voters, as well as politicians responses, revelations of relatively high corruption increased the percentage of average votes. According to voters learning, rewards were less among voters with minor criminal records and strong previous beliefs, and when audits reveal higher corruption and caused voters to update unfavorably their later beliefs. Besides supporting our theory, revelations of corruption increased participation, while low surprising information reduced participation.

QFD TEAM: Carolina Corral, Alejandra Rogel, Anais Anderson, Adriana Paz. Equipo de campo: Nancy Beltrán, Andrés Benito, Rodolfo Carrasco Zanini, Cecilia Castillejos, Diana Navarro, Eugenio Funes, Ismael García, Alejandra Gaspar, Víctor Gutiérrez, Marta Márquez, Bogart Márquez, Ana Meneses, Judith Reyes and Anabel Rodríguez.

**PUBLICATIONS/
REPORTS/NEWS:**

- <https://www.nber.org/papers/w24888>