

Pilot of “Is corruption undermining democracy?”

This brief document describes some results of our pilot involving 107 face-to-face surveys on tablets in the states of Puebla and in Mexico City. The objective was to test the questionnaire, how many people had seen the videos, and whether they believed they were real or not.

It turns out that 40% had not seen the videos and 90% thought the videos were real. In the follow up stage we plan to pre-screen to have a larger sample of those who had seen corruption videos. None had seen the INEGI figures on corruption we reported.

Although due to sample size the aim of the pilot was not to estimate effects, we did show corruption videos to about sixty percent of respondents (65) randomly. Table 1 below shows balance regressions (first 3 columns) and outcome regressions¹.

Randomization achieved balance. And surprisingly for such a small sample, we find that stated support for an authoritarian government doubles due to the videos, and there is a decrease of close to 100% of wanting to volunteer to be an election poll worker in the next election (i.e. a massive decrease in this kind of democratic social capital). Support for democracy decreased by close to 10%, although they are not statistically significant with this sample size.

	Balance			Results			
	Male	Gov. Satisfaction	High School or higher edu.	Democratic Satisfaction	Support for Democracy	Support for an Aut. Gov.	Polling officer
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Treatment dummy	-0.1491 (0.0986)	-0.1302 (0.2080)	-0.1505 (0.0974)	-0.0533 (0.1029)	-0.1246 (0.1220)	0.2229** (0.1017)	-0.2338** (0.1100)
Socioeconomic Controls	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	107	106	107	103	99	104	107
R-squared	0.0212	0.0038	0.0218	0.1651	0.1020	0.1651	0.2649
Mean dep. var	0.595	2.833	0.643	0.707	0.750	0.190	0.643

The exact questions are these:

2. How satisfied are you with the performance of the current federal government? Are you very satisfied (1), rather satisfied (2), not very satisfied (3), or not at all satisfied (4)?
4. In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the country?²
5. Which of the following sentences are you more agree? Democracy is preferable to any another form of government, or in some circumstances an authoritarian government may be preferable to a democratic one or to people like me, we do not care a democratic regime than a non-democratic one³.
6. Would you support a government that controls the media and can tap the phones if it succeeds in ending corruption?
7. If you were asked to be a poll worker for an election (without financial pay), would you accept?

¹ Socioeconomic controls include: Gender, Laboral status, Schooling and Income

² We code one if the person was very satisfied or satisfied and zero otherwise.

³ We code one if the interviewer express that democracy was preferable and zero otherwise.