**Supplementary Information**



**SI 2: Robustness**



Table SI 2 presents additional analyses that test the robustness of the results from our main model 2 (cf. Table 1). In model 1, we change our main explanatory variable, and employ electoral volatility instead of average party age as our measure of party system institutionalization. As noted in the main text, electoral volatility, which captures aggregate party system stability, is driven by the entry and exit of parties into the political system and by the stability of their support. We employ Mainwaring, Espana and Gervasoni’s measure for total volatility aggregated over the period 1990-2002,[[1]](#footnote-1) which captures the “absolute value of change in the percentage of votes gained or lost by each party from one election to the next”[[2]](#footnote-2) and is available for a reduced sample of 52 countries. Party systems that display higher levels of volatility are less institutionalized and feature lower (weaker) control of corruption scores as anticipated. In model 2, we address the fact that party system institutionalization, the age of democracy and wealth are correlated by orthogonalizing these three variables and replacing party system institutionalization with the residuals from the auxiliary regression. This procedure attributes all shared variation between party system institutionalization, wealth and democracy to the two latter variables and allows us to examine the effect of party system institutionalization on perceived corruption, net of that shared variance.[[3]](#footnote-3) As a result, the coefficients on wealth and age of democracy increase in size while the coefficient for party system institutionalization is slightly reduced, but the effect remains sizable and statistically significant. In models 3 and 4, we change our definition of democracy, and successively restrict the sample to focus on increasingly high quality democracies. In a first step we apply a polity threshold of 7, and in a second step a threshold of 8. The results are robust to all of these alternative specifications.

**References**

Clarke, Kevin A. and Randall W. Stone, 2008. Democracy and the Logic of Political Survival. *American Political Science Review* 102 (3): 387-392.

Mainwaring, Scott, Annabella Espana, and Carlos Gervasoni. 2009. Extra System Electoral Volatility and the Vote Share of Young Parties."*Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association*.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table SI 3: Descriptive Statistics (Panama)** |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| Vote Share Change | -2.17 | 10.05 | -33.7 | 20.1 |
| Vote Share | 26.66 | 12.69 | 2.6 | 66.2 |
| Corruption Allegations (both Papers) | 2.48 | 8.26 | 0 | 65 |
| Corruption Allegations (either Paper) | 2.64 | 8.24 | 0 | 65 |
| Party/Alliance Change | 0.24 | 0.43 | 0 | 1 |
| Urban Constituency | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Number of Candidates in District | 19.72 | 15.40 | 2 | 53 |
| Core Governing Party | 0.39 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| Major Opposition Party | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| Senior Legislative Position | 0.07 | 0.26 | 0 | 1 |
| Terms in Office | 1.52 | 0.72 | 1 | 4 |
| Age | 52.21 | 8.05 | 38 | 85 |
| Unemployment Rate (Constituency) | 8.91 | 4.00 | 1.5 | 17.7 |
| Vote Share (Previous Election) | 29.95 | 12.66 | 4.6 | 66.2 |
| Observations | 114 |

**SI 4: The marginal effect of part/alliance change**

This section analyses the additional implications of the interactive relationship between party switching/alliance change and corruption allegations. Berry, Golder and Milton recommend that researchers test their expectations about the marginal effects of *all* variables associated with an interaction term.[[4]](#footnote-4) Here we follow their recommendations, present an additional hypothesis and test the marginal effect of a party/alliance change. Given the inherent symmetry of interaction effects, our theory about the interactive relationship between party/alliance change and corruption allegations implies that a party/alliance change always compromises the ability of voters to hold their representatives accountable. Put differently, party/alliance change weakens the impact of a deputy's actions on their electoral performance, including the potentially negative effects of corruption. This should be true for all levels of corruption. This expectation can be summarized as follows:

Hypothesis SI 4: The marginal effect of a party/alliance change is to reduce the impact of deputies' actions on their electoral performance. This effect should be evident across all levels of corruption allegations.

Figure SI 4 enables us to assess this additional hypothesis by graphing the marginal effect of a party/alliance change on the change in the vote share of a deputy across the full range of values of corruption allegations in our data. The figure illustrates that party and alliance changes undermine effective accountability at all levels of corruption allegations. When deputies switch party or alliance, voter assessments of their performance become extremely variable and allegations about a deputy's corruption never have a statistically significant and negative effect on their electoral performance.

This result is consistent with the expectation outlined in Hypothesis SI 4 above and provides further evidence of the importance of party system institutionalization as a factor that conditions the effectiveness of electoral accountability. When aspects of low party system institutionalization such as party and alliance changes affect the relationship between voters and their deputies, electoral accountability is compromised.

**Figure SI 4: Marginal Effect of Party/Alliance Change while varying Corruption Allegation**



*Note:* The figure shows the marginal effect of party/alliance change (with 95% confidence intervals) while varying corruption allegation.

**References**

Berry, William D., Matt Golder, and Daniel Milton. 2012. Improving tests of theories positing interaction. *The Journal of Politics* 74 (3): 653–671.

1. Mainwaring, Espana and Gervasoni 2009. We record electoral volatility over this extended period in order to capture at least two elections per country. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mainwaring, Espana and Gervasoni 2009, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Clarke and Stone 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Berry, Golder and Milton 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)