

CORRUPTION AND GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN

By

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Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Political Science

May, 2013

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my adviser, Elizabeth Zechmeister, who has helped me along this master's thesis journey from beginning to end, facilitating me in developing a concept, guiding me in the writing process, and assisting me with the statistical analysis.

Additionally, thank you to my second reader, Jonathan Hiskey, for his helpful comments, and suggestions. Another thanks to Vanderbilt University's graduate classes PSCI 355 and PSCI 370, from the fall semester of 2012, for your critical evaluations and questions.

Thank you to Mollie Cohen and Suzanne Globetti for your help with Stata. I thank the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and its major supporters (the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Program, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Vanderbilt University) for making the data available.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family whose support has been endless and irreplaceable. A special thank you goes to my supportive and loving fiancé, Daniel Morgan, who has been by my side every step of the way.

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"When voters find out men have ethics and honesty issues, they say 'Well, I expected that.' When they find out it's a women, they say, 'I thought she was better than that.'"

-Cecilia Lake, Democratic Strategist, as quoted in Stolberg (2011, 2)-

INTRODUCTION

Gender dynamics in Latin American and Caribbean politics continue to change in dramatic ways. Female political leaders, such as Michelle Bachelet, Cristina Kirchner, Laura Chinchilla, and the newly elected Dilma Rousseff, are serving or recently have served in the highest political office of their respective countries. In addition, increased numbers of women are serving in political office as legislators. As Yingling (2007) reports, in 13 Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) nations there is a higher proportion of female legislators than is found in the United States Congress. In 2012, the Latin American region was identified as ranking second in the world (behind Nordic Europe) with respect to having the highest proportion of women in parliament (Torregrosa 2012). Overall, public support for female politicians has become more positive with time, as shown in a report from the Inter-American Dialogue and Gallup Organization (Latin American Women Leadership Study 2000). This growing support for female politicians prompts the question: *what factors lead to the support of female political candidates in the Latin American and Caribbean region?*

In applying Geddes' (2003) instruction on best practices in research methods, this question needs to be broken down into its constituent factors to better approach a comprehensive answer. In fact, political scientists already have begun to investigate the factors that affect vote choice for women by studying public opinion. Political scientists

have identified a range of factors that affect political candidate gender preferences that include perceptions of poverty, education, and corruption to name a few (Htun 2002).

In this thesis, I will investigate the extent to which perceptions of corruption and gender affect support for female political leaders. The study of perceptions of female candidates and corruption contributes knowledge to an understudied area of political science within scholarship on Latin America and the Caribbean by focusing on support for women who directly participate in the political system as opposed to barriers to office and struggles for representation in government (see Schwindt-Bayer 2010). By examining perceptions of female political candidates among voting age citizens, the thesis provides insights into women “inside of politics”.¹ This is of critical importance as more women are serving in political office and corruption, arguably, is a threat to democratic stability in relatively new democracies (such as those in Latin America and the Caribbean); moreover, it is plausible that what we learn about Latin American women's representation could be applied to similar political contexts around the world (Schwindt-Bayer 2010).

Specifically in this study I will evaluate the extent to which individuals in the Latin American and the Caribbean regions perceive corruption to be pervasive and see female political leaders as being more or less corrupt than men. I further examine, which gender reports more corruption and ultimately test an interaction hypothesis. The interaction hypothesis states that the relationship by which perceptions that corruption is pervasive affect beliefs that men make better political leaders depends on whether or not

¹ Using the voting age population is a means to approximately measure those who can vote in political systems. By using this group of participants, I assume that the majority (and, essentially, nearly all) of respondents are able to vote in the political system and are thus “inside” or “participating” in the political system.

one views women as less corrupt than men.² I expect the relationship to apply for those who view women as less corrupt, while the alternative belief (men as less corrupt) should diminish or reverse the relationship. In other words, I hypothesize and test whether the relationship between perceiving corruption to be pervasive and believing men are better political leaders depends on whether an individual views women as more or less corrupt than men.

I begin this thesis by addressing the political importance of the relationship between corruption and democracy, and then establish hypotheses through theory. Next, I provide a description of the data and methods, report the results of my analysis, and finish with a discussion of the results and recommendations for future research.

EFFECT OF CORRUPTION ON DEMOCRACY

Corruption ("abuse of public office for private gain") and its effects on democracy have been long debated in political science, as compared to economists who have notably regarded it as destructive for democracy by reducing investment incentives and economic growth (Seligson 2002, 408). Two schools of thought have appeared for corruption, one that sees it as the "grease to the wheels" and the other as a threat to democracy (Seligson 2002). Seligson holds that the "grease" (or in other words beneficial) perspective is founded upon "anecdotal and/or theoretical evidence" (2002, 414). He identifies that it was not until recent years that empirical evidence has provided a strong base for arguing that corruption is negative for democratic legitimacy. In studying four Latin American countries (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Paraguay) and utilizing the TI Corruption

² "Latin America and the Caribbean" in this study refers to Latin America and the Caribbean with the exclusion of Cuba and smaller Caribbean nations due to an absence of data.

Perception Index for 1999 in combination with survey data, he finds that corruption erodes support for the political system and decreases interpersonal trust (Seligson 2002). Seligson argues that "in order for political systems to function reasonably well, actions taken by leaders need to be viewed as legitimate" (2002, 429). The negative consequences of corruption are also postulated by Kaufman. Kaufman identifies that some hold corruption to be a means to avoid "burdensome regulations" (1997, 115). In contrast to this perspective on corruption, he holds that corruption, ultimately, creates a cyclical process where it "fuels excessive and discretionary regulations" that then fuel more corruption (Kaufman 1997). Specifically, Kaufman shows that corruption damages growth within countries. Citing research by Paolo Mauro he notes that aggregate investment in corrupt nations is five percent less than relatively clean countries, and that corrupt nations spend less money on public goods, such as education (1997). In summation, Kaufman argues that, "Corruption is negatively associated with developmental objectives everywhere" (1997, 120). Generally, Kaufman (1997) and Seligson (2002) provide strong evidence that corruption is a threat to factors (public legitimacy and economic performance) that are important for democratic stability.

New democracies are particularly susceptible to the eroding effects of corruption because corruption's presumed negative consequences can lead to high levels of discontent and, in turn, lower support for the new democratic system. Anderson and Tverdora (2003) argue that citizens who are unhappy with their political systems are more likely to desire radical change in their governments and move away from their present systems. Assuming that corruption makes citizens unhappy with their political systems, a connection between corruption and the desire for radical change in their

governments can be made.³ In this case, a democracy that has pervasive corruption is at risk for radical system change from a public demanding reduced corruption. Bringing the various pieces of evidence together, Anderson and Tverdora's (2003) findings that corruption fosters negative evaluations of political system performance and Seligson's corresponding study lead me to argue that corruption is a threat to democracy as it creates disenchantment with the political system. Further, I argue that new democracies are more susceptible to these outcomes, as transitioning democracies tend to come with higher levels of corruption and the transition process itself can be difficult for citizens (see Anderson and Tverdora 2003). Transitions marked by corruption are particularly burdensome to citizens as they watch others personally and illegitimately gain while they themselves suffer through the uncertainty and other challenges of political transition, a situation that may prompt them to question the benefit of a democratic transition (Anderson and Tverdora 2003). Overall, this shows the problems corruption creates for new democracies. It is important to note that while new democracies are susceptible in this context, established democracies also suffer from corruption's negative consequences, although this may be to a lesser degree (Anderson and Tverdora 2003).

The research described above (Seligson 2002; Kaufman 1997; Anderson and Tverdora 2003) supports the conclusion that, corruption is a threat to democracy, with new democracies more susceptible to its negative influence. Individuals associate corruption with negative political system performance, and if the system is not responsive to their perceptions it will appear broken. This is particularly dangerous for new democracies where people are deciding if the new system serves them better than the old

³ Strengthening the connection between corruption and unhappiness is the argument that corruption hurts democracy. Additionally, Hossain et al. (2010) identify struggles for individuals stemming from corruption. Particularly, the article connects the poor and women to additional suffering from corruption.

system. Given that corruption is of such great political importance, and in particular in newer democracies, it is important to examine public opinion on the topic and how it relates to citizens' preferences over political leaders. By assessing how opinions about corruption relate to gendered political perceptions, we gain insight into the links between citizens, corruption, and democratic politics. At the same time, this focus on gender, corruption, and democracy has the potential to increase understandings of the factors contributing to the increased numbers of female politicians elected in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Gender matters in politics. As Huddy and Terkildsen write, "From even the most casual observation of recent political campaigns, it is clear that a candidate's gender is politically relevant, though not necessarily a harbinger of electoral success or defeat" (1993, 120). Given the significance of corruption to new democracies, as established in the previous section, in this thesis I examine individuals' opinions with respect to corruption and gender in politics.

In terms of individuals' perceptions of whether male or female political leaders are more corrupt, I expect that women tend to be viewed as less corrupt. I hold this expectation because women are often perceived as political outsiders, one step removed from "politics as usual." Braden supports this perspective, noting that "As outsiders, women were considered likely to be more honest and idealistic and less corruptible than

men" (1996, 64).⁴ This notion that women are perceived as outsiders provides one plausible mechanism by which female politicians would be viewed as more honest than men. The relationship between gender stereotypes and seeing women as political outsiders is not necessarily only unidirectional, but nonetheless multiple sources indicate that women as outsiders has led to the perception that women are more honest than men. Sung writes, "The argument centering on the rule-abiding tendency of women and the rule-breaking proclivity of men follows naturally from models that treat female participation in government as an exogenous factor" (2003, 703). This quote argues that women are seen as more honest than men due to the perception that women are separate from "politics as usual;" this provides more support for the idea that women as political outsiders are then seen as more honest than men because of that perception. Ultimately, Sung (2003) and Braden (1996) indicate that it is the role of women as "political outsiders" that drives the perception that women are more honest than men.⁵

This idea of women as political outsiders is presented by the literature as a universal claim, one that applies regardless of the world under study. Therefore, it is plausible that this relationship holds in the Latin American and Caribbean context.

This leads to my first hypothesis:

H1: Individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean, on average perceive women to be less corrupt than men.

It is important to recognize that there already exists some evidence in support of this hypothesis. Considering the Latin American region, The Inter-American Dialogue and Gallup Organization finds the majority of Latin Americans polled (57%) believe that

⁴ It is important to note that Braden (1996) uses the term "outsider" to refer to the uniqueness of women to politics, as something that is separate.

women are better at combating corruption than men and between 66% and 73% perceive women as more honest than men (Latin American Women Leadership Study 2000). This study utilized a survey with 2,022 adult interviews in major cities spanning five countries, with roughly 400 interviews per country (Latin American Women Leadership Study 2000).

Additional studies parallel these conclusions; Fox and Smith (1998) note several articles that support the notion that people perceive women to be more honest than men.⁶ Furthermore, two studies focused on small samples of college students concluded that female candidates were seen as "competent" in "maintaining honesty and integrity in government" (Rossenwasser 1987, 197; Sapiro 1981-1982). Holman et al. write "women are generally seen as trustworthy" (2011, 175). As demonstrated by the above citations and studies, there is significant support for the concept that women are seen as more trustworthy than men.

The positive implication of the idea that women are more honest than men is that electing women will decrease corruption. In fact, evidence exists suggesting that a higher proportion of women in government is associated with less corruption (Dollar et al. 1999; Swamy et al. 2000). Many argue that electing women who have more morals than men brings honesty and altruism to government (Dollar et al. 1999; Swamy et al. 2000).

It is important to recognize, however, that the assertion that women in politics are less corrupt than men is not uncontroversial. The flip side to the above argument is that women may not actually be more honest than men, regardless of perception. As Hossain et al. note: "The idea that women inherently possess greater integrity than men and that

⁶ I was unable to access two articles that Fox and Smith used to support the claim that women were perceived as more honest than men. These articles were cited in the text as Leeper (1991) and Kaid et al. (1984).

there is therefore less corruption under their leadership has been challenged by... alternate hypotheses" (2011, 20).

Multiple articles have come forward with arguments against the concept that women are inherently more honest than men. Sung argues that it is the "fairer system" (a liberal democracy) not the "fairer sex" that causes this association (that is, the association whereby increased women in government is negatively correlated with corruption) (2003). Another perspective holds that "Where corruption is stigmatized, women will be less tolerant of corruption and less likely to participate compared to men. But if 'corrupt' behaviors are an ordinary part of governance supported by political institutions, there will be no corruption gender gap" (Esarey and Chirillo 2012, 24).⁷ These arguments posit that it is the system not the inherent good nature of a particular gender that affects corruption engagement. Goetz argues that it is the "gendered nature of access to politics and public life [that] shapes opportunities for corruption" (2007, 87). The author posits that gender relations may influence the context with respect to opportunities for corruption; if corruption functions predominately in male networks then women could be excluded from these opportunities (Goetz 2007). If political systems put forward more female public officials, female corruption networks could develop and systems of elicited exchange for their own benefit could increase corruption among females (Goetz 2007). Overall, there is support for the concept that it may not be an integrity difference between the genders that accounts for empirical findings of a relationship between women and decreased corruption. These perspectives contrast with ones that posit that women have inherently different morals.

⁷ This paper was a "revise and resubmit." It was profiled in the *Chicago Tribune*. It can be found here: <http://jee3.web.rice.edu/research.htm>.

This debate over whether women are in fact more or less corrupt becomes problematic for democracy when people vote for female candidates to eradicate corruption and the female candidates have the same potential for corruption. Although the actual level of honesty will not be tested in this thesis, these arguments have important implications for how this study should be considered.

This study regarding corruption and gender stereotypes adds value with respect to understanding this potentially threatening issue to democracy. Knowing what the average Latin American perceives about gender and then translating that into vote preference can help us to understand how perceptions of gender and corruption are functioning in politics in the Latin American and Caribbean region. This will allow us to understand one crucial aspect of (potential) voters' perceptions, in that region, when it comes to gender and corruption. Additionally, the idea that women may not be inherently more honest suggests, that in current times, public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean region may not follow previous studies, as citizens may be learning women are not inherently less corrupt than men. In short, while I expect the relationship identified in hypothesis 1, there are reasons to question whether or not it will indeed hold in 2012.

I turn next to the establishment of my second hypothesis. In this case, I expect issue saliency and corruption to impact the perception of which gender is less corrupt. The mechanism behind this argument is issue saliency. Zaller writes, in regards to survey takers, "Their responses to typical survey questions then depend on which aspect of the issue is most salient to them, where saliency depends partly on purely chance factors, such as what appeared on television the night before..." (2011, 55). In his perspective,

individuals hold multiple viewpoints and it is the one that is at the “top-of-the-head” that is expressed (2011, 64).

This notion of issue salience is applicable to corruption. Zaller argues that issues can be more or less salient to an individual based on myriad factors, such as media reporting, demographic factors, and socioeconomic factors (2011). This saliency affects the context in which someone is making political decisions and may heighten perceptions of corruption and in turn influence perceptions of corruption and gender. Drawing from this perspective, I expect that those who perceive corruption as a larger issue will view women as even less corrupt because that stereotype (discussed above) will be activated and exaggerated when the issue is in the forefront. Therefore, the logic is that when corruption is seen as pervasive the concept of women being less corrupt will also be inflated.

Taking the concept of issue saliency in combination with the idea that the average Latin American and Caribbean individual will see women as less corrupt (from hypothesis 1), I develop hypothesis 2:

H2: Those who perceive corruption to be pervasive will think women are less corrupt than men to a higher degree than those who perceive corruption to be less pervasive.

The idea that individuals, on average, view women as less corrupt fits within this hypothesis. Rossenwasser (1987), Sapiro (1981-1982), and the Latin American Women Leadership Study all show that women are perceived as more honest than men. This idea that women are less corrupt should relate to the idea that corruption is common. If corruption is perceived as very pervasive then the issue is likely to be more salient. Again, Zaller (2011) has supported the idea that what is at the “top of the head” affects

your survey answers and what you perceive. I expect the saliency of corruption, (thinking it is more common), should amplify the degree to which women are perceived as less corrupt. Taking these items together is evidence for hypothesis 2.

I turn now to my third hypothesis, which again draws on the idea of issue saliency but now introduces an interaction. Again recall that, saliency affects the context in which someone is making political decisions and may heighten perceptions of corruption and in turn influence perceptions of corruption and gender. The logic is that when corruption is pervasive, this is deemed more of a problem and the logical choice is to put the less corrupt gender in office as a response to the pervasive issue.⁸ To perceive female or male political leaders as “better” depends on whether or not one perceives women or men to be less corrupt when corruption is perceived as common.

H3: The relationship between perceiving corruption to be pervasive and believing men are better political leaders depends on whether he/she views women as being more or less corrupt than men.

The first component of this relationship is the general expectation that as the perception of corruption being pervasive increases, the belief that men make better political leaders decreases. But the interaction adds to that the expectation that this relationship depends on whether or not you view women as less corrupt than men. The expectation of this study is that the more one believes corruption is common the less that men will be viewed as better political leaders for those who perceive women to be less corrupt than men. I expect to find a stronger relationship among these variables for those

⁸ Here I am taking the more recent and empirically supported stance that corruption is bad for democracy as argued in Seligson (2002), Kaufman (1997), and Anderson and Tverdora (2003).

who view women as less corrupt, while the alternative diminishes or reverse the relationship.

Lastly, I test one more hypothesis related to gender and corruption. Different demographic characteristics are associated with different experiences with corruption. Seligson, (2002) but particularly, Anderson and Tverdora (2003) demonstrate this concept in their previously cited works. As Seligson notes, those who are asked to pay bribes may have different interpretations for what that means for democracy. He goes on to say that standard demographic and socioeconomic variables could be factors affecting perceptions of corruption (2002). For example, it has been shown that it becomes more difficult for the poor to obtain public services when corruption is present and the poor are hurt economically when corruption is present (Shah and Schacter 2004; Chetwynd et al. 2003). This argument is summarized in the statement that “The burden of petty corruption falls disproportionately on poor people, who generally have common cause with an anticorruption agenda” (“Causes of Poverty and a Framework for Action” 2000/2001, 39). Put simply, the poor suffer more in the presence of corruption.

Hypothesis 4 addresses the issue of women and their experience with corruption. I expect women to report more corruption than men. This is derived from the idea that women suffer more when there is corruption. This is a function of the idea that women tend to be poorer than men and this puts them at a disadvantage for corruption (Hossain et al. 2011). A report from the United Nations Development Programme argues that, "Because women make up the majority of the world's poor, corruption disproportionately affects women and girls..." (Hossain et al. 2011, 8). This conclusion is based on the idea

that the poor rely on public goods for survival and when corruption depletes those goods, it causes them difficulties (Hossain et al. 2011; Shah and Schacter 2004).

I argue that women suffer more from corruption than men. Furthermore, women also disapprove of corruption more than men (Esarey and Chirillo 2012). I expect these differences will lead to dissimilarities in their perspective on corruption and its level of pervasiveness. In this case, women should report corruption more than men.

This notion that women experiencing corruption differently will be addressed, at least in small part, with hypothesis 4:

H4: Women will perceive corruption as more pervasive.

In the case of hypothesis 4, the test of this hypothesis is limited to a comparison of reporting corruption. This will provide a good look at which gender perceives corruption to be more common but does not test suffering for each gender because of corruption. A survey measure that looks at actual suffering from corruption would be another good test, but the data does not provide a means to test it.

Some evidence does exist to support hypothesis 4. As discussed above, Hossain et al. (2011) and Shah and Schacter (2004) provide evidence to support the idea that women suffer more from corruption. This again stems from the idea that women make up the majority of the poor.⁹ These two pieces lead me to expect women to perceive corruption to be more common because they are more prone to feel its negative effects.

⁹ Evidence beyond these pieces is hard to come by. I found that most articles focused on whether women were more or less corrupt and the perception of women. I find that Hossain et al. (2011) gives a strong argument as to why we should expect women to report more corruption, as they feel its effects more.

DATA AND METHOD

The dependent variables for this study are perceptions of female and male corruption and perceptions of which gender makes a better political leader. The goal is to look at the relationship between perceptions of which gender is less corrupt, corruption pervasiveness, and evaluations of male and female leaders. The independent variables are perceptions of corruption pervasiveness and perceptions of which gender is less corrupt. It is important to note that the perception of corruption pervasiveness is a dependent and independent variable depending on the test.

In assessing these claims, I make use of data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). These data allow me to analyze public perceptions of corruption and leader gender. The data includes survey information from 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, plus the U.S. and Canada, although these latter two countries have been dropped from the dataset for the purposes of this study. Looking at this region as a whole provides the opportunity to assess Latin America and the Caribbean with respect to perceptions of corruption and gender.

All of the variables were recoded from 0 to 1 for an easier comparison of effects. Multivariate regressions were used for all of the hypotheses except H1 which was a simple tabulation.¹⁰ The interaction hypothesis expressed in hypothesis 3 is tested through a comparison of separate regressions with each one restricted to include only those registering a particular value of the moderating variable. The LAPOP survey design was split for one of the key questions in this study, meaning that only half of the

¹⁰ All data were analyzed using Stata v11.

respondents to the entire AmericasBarometer survey were asked that question, which reduces the number of respondents analyzed in that case by half.¹¹ Country effects are controlled for with dummy variables created in using the `i.pais` command. Additional controls include gender, age, wealth, education, and urban (versus rural residence). The following questions are the primary ones utilized in the study:

VB51 "Who do you think would be more corrupt as a politician, a man or a woman, or are both?"

VB50 "Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?"

EXC7 "Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is..."

Q1 "[Note down; do not ask] Sex: (1) Male (2) Female"

Table 1 (below) provides key descriptive statistics for the variables:

¹¹ In future studies, running the analyses taking into account the survey weight assigned to each country would allow a more accurate means of determining the average Latin American and Caribbean perception of gender and corruption. This version of the dataset I was using would not give calculations for the survey command. The differences between using the survey command and not are likely minor, but using a robustness check with a future version of the data is warranted.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Corruption Perceived as Common	36,180	0.710	0.283	0	1
Women Perceived as Less Corrupt than Men	18,444	0.631	0.271	0	1
Men are Perceived as Better Political Leaders	36,566	0.361	0.283	0	1
Age	38,275	0.383	0.310	0	1
Wealth	38,583	0.483	0.355	0	1
Education	38,210	0.516	0.241	0	1
Female	38,630	0.506	0.500	0	1
Urban	38,631	0.344	0.475	0	1

RESULTS

I begin by testing hypothesis 1, which states that individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean, on average perceive women to be less corrupt than men. I find support for this expectation. Although the majority of Latin American and Caribbean citizens surveyed selected that both genders were thought to be equally corrupt, the number that chose women as less corrupt than men, as compared to men less corrupt than women is much larger. 5,752 respondents chose women to be less corrupt than men while 934 said men were less corrupt than women. This tilts the average (.631) in favor of perceiving women as less corrupt than men on the 0-1 scale.

Table 2 Who do you think would be more corrupt as a politician, a man, a woman, or are both?

womanlesscorrupt variable values	Frequency	Percent
Women are less corrupt than men	5,752	31.19
Women and men are equally corrupt	11,758	63.75
Men are less corrupt than women	934	5.06
Total	18,444	100.00
Notes: Tabulation command on womenlesscorrupt		

This support for hypothesis 1 indicates that individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean do view women as less corrupt than men, on average.

Hypothesis 2 states: Those who perceive corruption to be pervasive will think women are less corrupt than men to a higher degree than those who perceive corruption to be less pervasive. I test this expectation using a multivariate regression in which the key independent variable is the measure of corruption perceived as common (corruptcommon) and the dependent variable is the measure of women perceived as less corrupt than men (womenlesscorrupt). Table 3 provides the output of the regression.

Table 3 Regression on Women Perceived as Less Corrupt than Men

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
Corruption Perceived as Common	.044	.008***
Female	.017	.004***
Age	.011	.007
Wealth	.016	.006*
Education	.006	.011
Urban	-.004	.005
Notes: 17,171 observations, R-Squared is .046, country fixed effects are included but not shown		
p < .01 level***		
p < .05**		
p < .10 level*		

Hypothesis 2 is supported by the regression results presented in table 3. The more one perceives corruption to be common the more female politicians are perceived to be less corrupt. This is statistically significant at the .01 level. Substantively, the effect is small given the coefficient of .04 on a 0 to 1 scale.

Now I will test the interaction hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 states: The relationship between perceiving corruption to be pervasive and believing men are better political leaders depends on whether he/she views women as being more or less corrupt than men. To test this interaction I place the moderating variable of perceiving women as less corrupt than men at several values to compare the significance and effect. Given the data, I will look at the effect for those who perceive women to be less corrupt than men, perceive women and men to be equally corrupt, and lastly perceive men to be less corrupt than women.

Table 4 Regression for Interaction Hypothesis When Women Perceived as Less Corrupt than Men

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
Corruption Perceived as Common	-.003	.014
Female	-.129	.008***
Age	-.008	.014
Wealth	-.009	.012
Education	-.099	.020***
Urban	.019	.009
Notes: 5,244 observations, R-Squared is .11, Dependent variable (DV) is Men Perceived as Better Political Leaders, country fixed effects are included but not shown		
p < .01 level***		
p < .05**		
p < .10 level*		

Table 5 Regression for Interaction Hypothesis When Women and Men are Perceived as Equally as Corrupt

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
Corruption Perceived as Common	-.015	.009
Female	-.092	.005***
Age	.002	.009
Wealth	-.002	.008
Education	-.113	.013***
Urban	.007	.006
Notes: 10,444 observations, R-Squared is .09, DV is Men Perceived as Better Political Leaders, country fixed effects are included but not shown		
p < .01 level***		
p < .05**		
p < .10 level*		

Table 6 Regression for Interaction Hypothesis When Men are Perceived as Less Corrupt than Women

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
Corruption Perceived as Common	.073	.034*
Female	-.156	.022***
Age	.006	.035
Wealth	-.044	.031
Education	.022	.055
Urban	-.010	.023
Notes: 826 observations, R-Squared is .19, DV is Men Perceived as Better Political Leaders, country fixed effects are included but not shown		
p < .01 level***		
p < .05**		
p < .10 level*		

For the interaction hypothesis, the results are mixed. When women are perceived as less corrupt or the genders are perceived as equally corrupt, the effect of corruption perceived as common on the dependent variable is not statistically significant. When men are perceived as less corrupt than women the interaction is statistically significant at the .10 level. Therefore on average and holding all else constant, when men are perceived as

less corrupt than women the evidence suggests this relationship holds: as the perception of corruption being pervasive increases the belief that men make better political leaders also increases. This relationship is not substantively large as the coefficient is .073 on a 0-1 scale. Investigating into this relationship would be interesting for the future.

Finally, I examine hypothesis 4, which is stated as follows: women will perceive corruption as more pervasive. Again, this is based on the notion that women suffer more from corruption. Keep in mind, however, that measuring the pervasiveness of corruption is not an exact measure for looking at suffering from corruption. Table 5 contains the regression results.

Table 7 Which Gender Perceives Corruption to be More Pervasive

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
Female	-.012	.003***
Age	.036	.005***
Wealth	.018	.004***
Education	.079	.007***
Urban	-.013	.003***

Notes: 35,526 observations, R-Squared is .10, DV is Corrupt is Perceived as Common, country fixed effects are included but not shown
p < .01 level***
p < .05**
p < .10 level*

Looking at the results, the hypothesis is not supported. This is statistically significant at the .01 level.¹² On average and holding all else constant, being a woman is associated with perceiving corruption as less common in comparison with men. This again is substantively small as a coefficient of .012 on a 0 to 1 scale is not an overwhelmingly large maximum change in the dependent variable. Perhaps women suffer

¹² It is important to consider that wealth is included as a control and as discussed earlier is a factor that may drive this relationship. Thus this measure may be biasing the results against gender.

more from corruption but are not as aware of its pervasiveness because it is more of a male activity.

DISCUSSION

With the increasing presence of women in political office, this study has made an effort to understand why this change is happening in greater proportions in the Latin American region. Overall I find mixed results for my hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported, as I find that the average Latin American and Caribbean citizen perceives women as less corrupt than men and I find that as perceptions of corruption pervasiveness increases, seeing women as less corrupt increases. I fail to find support for the specific statement of hypothesis 3, although the regression analysis finds a statistically significant relationship whereby when men are perceived as less corrupt than women the relationship between perceiving corruption as common and men as better political leaders than women holds. Finally, I do not find support for hypothesis 4, which states that women will perceive corruption to be more common than men.

Future research could include country by country comparisons that take a more in depth look at contextual factors related to corruption and gender to provide a clearer picture as to how these relationships are functioning in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Further, it could be worthwhile to explore neutral and positive perspectives of corruption and gender, as for some nations this may indeed be the “Grease to the Wheels” that Seligson (2002) acknowledges (but argues against). This study has adopted the approach that corruption is perceived as bad for democracy, but perhaps pervasive

corruption is not an issue and therefore does not have an effect on vote choice with regards to candidate gender.

From this study, a deeper understanding has been gained on the perception of corruption and gender, the variation of this perception with saliency of corruption and gender perceptions as related to corruption. This topic is of importance as perceptions of female political leaders are growing more positive in Latin America (Latin American Women Leadership Study 2000) and an increasing number of women are serving in political office in the region. Yet most studies have thus far only focused on women fighting to gain representation. This study instead has focused on women “inside” of politics (Schwindt-Bayer 2010). This thesis has given us more understanding of the big question: *what factors lead to the support of female political candidates in the Latin American and Caribbean region?*

Additionally, this study takes a look at corruption which has serious implications for developing democracies. As discussed earlier, new democracies are fragile. Knowledge related to how perceptions of corruption relate to other political attitudes can enhance our understandings of the public opinion contexts that characterize new democracies as they work to remain politically stable.

Furthermore, the completion of this study gives firmer ground for the confirmation that female political leaders are perceived as less corrupt than men. This is valuable for the implementation of policy that depends upon this information and for additional studies that analyze corruption and gender. Additionally, more information about the relationship between perceptions of corruption and gender will be known for a region of the world, Latin America and the Caribbean, which has growing female

representation and has remained understudied in this context. This is fundamentally important as the demographics of public officials are changing and identifying factors that might underlie these changes can ultimately help us to better understand why this is happening in certain contexts and not in others.

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