

Punishing Corruption: The Impact of Corruption Allegations in the 2006 Brazilian
Congressional Elections

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Abstract

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Abstract: Are corrupt politicians in Brazil punished at the ballot box? To answer this question I will take a look at the 2006 Brazilian congressional elections and use the results to compare it to previous research on U.S. congressional elections. I argue that, as in the case of U.S. incumbents accused of corruption, Brazilian members of Congress will also lose a substantial number of votes, in the face of corruption allegations. Indeed, contrary to the U.S., most will lose their seat because they cannot afford any vote loss given the Brazilian electoral system. I will also argue that access to information is a key element in determining if voters punish corrupt politicians, especially in the Brazilian political environment, and that Brazilian election rules will make campaign spending a key element for re-election.

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I. Introduction

The study of corruption has increased in breadth and depth over the past years. Governments and other institutions have been engaged in controlling and curbing corruption, and the study of corruption in elections has long been an important topic in political science (see Rundquist et al. 1977; Erskine 1973; Heidenheimer and Johnston 2005). Nonetheless the number of studies that focus on the influence of corruption on voting behavior is limited. There have been some experimental approaches regarding voting behavior and corruption allegations in the United States (Rundquist et al. 1977), as well as some work on how corruption allegations affect congressional election success (Peters and Welch 1980; Welch and Hibbing 1997). However comparative approaches to these same issues are very limited. The goal of this study is to open the debate on voting behavior and corruption allegations to other political systems in the world by making use of an approach developed by Peters and Welch (1980) and Welch and Hibbing (1997) and applying it to Brazil. In particular, I argue that Brazilian voters, when given information about corrupt politicians, will punish them at the ballot box.

Brazil is regarded as a highly corrupt country. For example, Transparency International's (TI) 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which compares 163 countries according to perceived corruption, ranked Brazil 70th in the world, with a CPI index value that tied the country with China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Mexico, Peru, and Senegal in terms of transparency. Brazil ranked lower than countries such as Cuba, Croatia, Lebanon, Jamaica, Uruguay, and Chile, among others (Transparency

International 2006). Not only is corruption highly visible in the Brazilian political system but it is sometimes seen as the historical heritage of the country's formative years as a Portuguese colony and even as a legitimate way to govern the country (Shilling 1999: 35).

But if corruption is such a problem in Brazil, what impact does it have on voting behavior? Are corrupt politicians rewarded or punished by Brazilian voters? This is the central question of this research. In order to attempt to answer this question, I will analyze the effect of corruption allegations on the 2006 congressional elections. The 2006 elections are special in comparison to other congressional elections in Brazil due to the fact that two major national political scandals happened at the national level just before the elections, leaving an already tarnished institution even more tainted in the eyes of the average voter. According to an IBOPE survey taken in August 2005, 84 percent of the Brazilian population distrusts the Chamber of Deputies, up from 74 percent in May 2005 and 63 percent in 2003. In comparison to other institutions the Chamber of Deputies has one of the lowest levels of trust within the society, falling behind the judiciary (51 percent), the armed forces (27 percent), and even the police (61 percent) (IBOPE 2005a). Not only is the Chamber of Deputies distrusted as an institution, according to IBOPE (2005a), but politicians as individuals are also highly distrusted by the population at an astonishing rate of 90 percent. However, even though Brazilians do not trust these individuals they still must vote and elect them. The underlying question then is: does the electorate punish politicians it does not trust?

While answering this question seems straightforward, the Brazilian political environment and election rules make the discussion slightly more complex. In order to understand the extent to which voters punish politicians this research will look at two specific aspects of the election results: the raw results (did the corrupt candidate get re-elected?), and the change in the number of votes. It is important to note that Brazilian electoral rules provide politicians with some tools to minimize the consequences of punishment at the voting booth, especially through party affiliation changes. Therefore, it is necessary to address this issue and explore other factors that play a role in congressional re-election in Brazil.

The goal of this research, to understand the impact of corruption on voting behavior in Brazilian congressional elections, is important not only for Brazilian and Latin American scholars but also for election scholars in general. Understanding the impact of corruption on voting behavior in Brazil furthers the study of the relationship between corruption and voting behavior throughout the world, thereby contributing to the growing literature of corruption and voting behavior. Furthermore, the study of the 2006 elections provides a fresh look into the Brazilian political environment by exploring the changes in the political system as well as changes in voter preference. Brazil's "new" democracy is a fluid one that has been changing dramatically in the past 20 years; any research that tries to understand these changes will contribute greatly to Brazilian political literature.

This research will be divided in five parts. Part II will focus on four specific themes: defining corruption, previous literature on corruption and voting behavior,

the Brazilian electoral laws and how it may affect the study of corruption and voting behavior, and the Brazilian scandals of 2005 and 2006 and how they shaped public opinion. Part III will focus on the research question itself and on the operationalization of the variables. Part IV will discuss the results of the research. Finally, Part V will compare the results to previous works in U.S. Politics, as well as describe what should be done in future related research.

II. Corruption and Elections: Defining and Describing

What is corruption and how can we connect corruption to voting behavior?

This section will explore these questions by discussing how scholars define corruption in a broad perspective as well as in the Brazilian perspective. Then I will discuss what previous literature tells us about corruption and voting behavior, paying special attention to the works of Peters and Welch (1980), Welch and Hibbing (1997), and Ferraz and Finan (2005).

A. Defining Corruption

Political corruption has been studied by all social sciences thoroughly in the past four decades. While the study of corruption has focused in developing countries (Robinson 1998; Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1980; and Ward 1989) and in former communist countries (Kotkin and Sajo 2002), corruption has become a major issue in

most countries regardless of their economic development or political system. In 2005 alone Transparency International (TI) reported corruption issues in countries like the United States, Germany, Canada, Israel, Iraq, Brazil, Kenya, and South Africa and in institutions like the United Nations (Porznuk 2005). Since the late 1990s social scientists, together with policymakers and aid donors have examined corruption and the issue of governance with renewed interest. For example, the World Bank and its donors and recipients have been especially interested in monitoring corruption not only in aid-financed projects but also in a broader perspective in their recipient countries (Kaufmann et. al. 2005).

Corruption is becoming an important area of study in political science, but we still do not have a universal definition of corruption. According to Kotkin and Sajo (2002: 2), “corruption is a well-established notion, at least in one sense: we all know experts will never agree on any single definition.” The first problem with analyzing corruption is the fact that the term may have a different meanings depending on the region or country being analyzed. Goldsmith (1999) argues that corruption can be considered subjective and culturally biased, while Rose-Ackerman (1999: 5) explains that “one person's bribe is another person's gift. A political leader or public official who aids friends, family members, and supporters may seem praiseworthy in some societies and corrupt in others.” In the case of Brazilian politics, corruption has been seen as being a part of political life that the average voter sees as normal, and sometimes even necessary. Since the re-establishment of democracy in the early 1980s Brazil has been the stage for numerous political scandals, ranging from the

local level to the highest political level in the country. Political scandals are also not limited to one branch of the government since all three branches have experienced some type of political scandals. However, a cultural concept called *rouba, mas faz* (“he steals, but gets the job done”) has long been considered an accepted fact of politics.

If the *rouba mas faz* concept holds true the cultural approach proposed by Goldsmith and Rose-Ackerman could be used to explain the Brazilian political environment. However, recent polls suggest that the *rouba mas faz* mentality is not part of Brazilian political culture. In a 2006 poll conducted by IBOPE for *Transparencia Brasil (TB)* (Abramo 2007) voters were asked to rate the job done by outgoing governors in all Brazilian states as well as their perception of the governor’s honesty. According to the survey, 86 percent of voters that thought the governor did a good job also believed that he/she was honest, while only 11 percent of voters thought that corrupt governors did a good job. Among voters who judged their governors as bad politicians, 50 percent considered them dishonest and incompetent, while only 5 percent considered them honest and incompetent. These results show a relation between voters considering governors good politicians and their perception of that individual’s honesty. Based on these results the *rouba mas faz* mentality does not appear to be the opinion of the majority of the electorate. Brazilians perceive efficiency and honesty as two determining factors in electing politicians and therefore the average voter will not reward corrupt politicians even if they get things done.

While some aspects of corruption are culturally bound, there are other aspects of corruption that are illegal and unethical regardless of the culture. For example, Goldsmith (1999: 868) argues that “outright extortion and payoffs are never officially condoned.” Lira (2005: 10) provides a good explanation of corruption in Brazil and consequentially provides a definition that can be used when studying corruption from the perspective of the Brazilian citizen. He defines corruption as the use of the public machine, by the bureaucrat or the politician, to obtain private gains.¹ The author also provides a definition of public corruption in the context of Brazilian politics:

Public corruption is a social relation (personal, outside the market, and illegal) established between two agents or two groups of agents (corruptee and corruptors), in which the main objective is the illegal transfer of income, within the society or the public fund, for the use in strictly private endeavors. This relationship involves the exchange of favors between groups of agents and normally the remuneration of the corruptors by the use of bribery and any other type of incentives, conditioned by the rules of the game, and by the system of incentives that emerge from the game (Lira 2005: 12, *author translation*).

While this definition is more sensitive to the idea of corruption as it is perceived in Brazil, it is also similar to many of the definitions of corruption used in most of the literature. For example, Mark Philp (in Heidenheimer 2005: 42) recognizes the pattern of political corruption as a public official who violates the trust placed in him by the public by knowingly engaging in a conduct that exploits public office for clear personal or private gain in a way contrary to rules and standards set

¹ Sentence translated and paraphrased from Portuguese by author.

for the conduct of the public office within the political culture, and Bahre simply defines corruption as the “misuse of public office for private gain” (2005: 107), a definition that is also shared by other authors and institutions such as Transparency International (TI) and the World Bank (Carvajal 1999: 337).

However, any official definition of corruption will not affect election results unless the population agrees with such definition. Friedrich (in Heidenheimer 2005: 33) defines this phenomenon as the public opinion definition of corruption. According to the author, “if there are significant differences between what a nation's law say and how most citizens define corruption, it is likely that officials and government employees will be guided more by local culture than by the words of law, and thus will be more likely to violate the law.” However, as it has been discussed above Brazilian voters seem to perceive corruption as illicit acts and they seem to acknowledge when politicians are corrupt. It is important to explore how the Brazilian population views the issue of legality and corruption in order to determine if their perspective of corruption matches Lira's definition of corruption. Because the average Brazilian seems to reward efficiency and honesty, and frown upon corruption Lira's (2005) definition of corruption (the use of the public machine, by the bureaucrat or the politician, to obtain private gains) is a good definition to be used in this research. While the definition of corruption is present in the culture of Brazilian voters the question of whether voters punish these corrupt politicians is the driving question of this research and a key determinant of the public opinion definition of corruption.

B. Corruption and Voting Behavior

According to Peters and Welch (1980), if individuals are asked about their voting behavior they will most likely claim that if they knew that a politician was corrupt they should not be re-elected. However, the reality may be a little different. Peters and Welch (1980) argue that problems with corrupt politicians being re-elected are present in many countries, including the United States. The question of electoral retribution is raised by Peters and Welch (1980) and Welch and Hibbing (1997) who look at the effects of charges of corruption on voting behavior in American congressional elections. According to these works, informed individuals are necessary in democratic governments in order to keep public officials in check through the election process (Peters and Welch 1980: 697). In this research the authors examine four specific reasons why American voters would support corrupt politicians.

First, voters may support corrupt politicians because they are uninformed or misinformed about candidates. The concept of an informed citizen is normally seen as unrealistic and even when the information regarding corrupt activities is available the voting public will absorb such information differently. According to Peters and Welch (1980: 697), “a segment of the voting public is likely to misperceive, selectively perceive, or, under some circumstances, refuse to believe the truth to the charges, depending on the credibility of the information source.” Second, support is connected to the “venal voter” idea. Voters may support corrupt politicians because

their vote can be traded for material advantage. Third, individuals may see corruption as part of the political system. Peters and Welch (1980: 698) acknowledge that some political cultures and subcultures see corruption as a fact of life, a normal practice in public and private business. Fourth, corrupt politicians may win because voters will use corruption accusations and charges as simply one of several collective issues weighted in order to decide on whom to vote.

In their work Peters and Welch (1980: 703) find some interesting results. Among these findings is the fact that corruption allegations will have negative impacts in the number of votes incumbents receive, impacting democrats more than republican candidates. While votes may diminish, the final result does not always mean the loss of election and in the case of the U.S. elections used in this research seniority played an important role in determining the fate of incumbents. Even though some senior incumbents may be able to absorb the loss of some votes, the authors conclude that electoral retribution does happen against candidates accused of corruption. Welch and Hibbing (1997) return to the same question posed by Peters and Welch in 1980 and they reach the same conclusion. According to Welch and Hibbing (1997: 237), “(corruption) charges rarely cause incumbent U.S. Representatives to resign, retire, or lose in primaries, but they do often cause them to lose votes and occasionally elections.”

But if we apply the same questions above to other countries, are we going to reach the same conclusions? This is the central question of this research. A similar question was asked by Ferraz and Finan (2005) when they used an anti-corruption

program implemented in Brazil to discuss the relationship between voter information and municipal elections in Brazil. According to Ferraz and Finan (2005: 23), “in April of 2003, the Brazilian government began an ambitious anti-corruption program designed to audit a municipality's expenditure of federal transferred funds.” By using information provided by these audits and determining the level of dissemination of the news about the audit, being it good or bad, the authors determined that “voters, when empowered with information, will hold corrupt politicians accountable” (Ferraz and Finan 2005: 23). Ferraz and Finan's paper provides a good starting point to answering the central question of this research, but the nature of municipal elections in Brazil differs greatly from the nature of Congressional elections² and therefore a different approach needs to be taken.

B.1. Assumptions in the Brazilian Perspective

This section will discuss some of the hypotheses proposed by Peters and Welch (1980) as to why individuals would vote for corrupt politicians and apply these hypotheses to the Brazilian context. I will explore three specific issues in regards to voting behavior and corrupt politicians: (1) Voter information, (2) the venal voter approach, and (3) the assumption that corruption is only one of the issues voters consider when casting a vote.

² The nature of Congressional elections will be discussed in part C.

The first issue discussed is the idea of voter information. The assumption that voters are misinformed or uninformed about candidates may be the reason why certain Brazilian politicians have stayed in power even after massive corruption allegations. In the 1980s and 1990s Kinzo and Dunkerkey (2003) point out that polls revealed between 86 percent and 89 percent of the population used television as their main source of information about politics. Given the situation regarding media ownership in Brazil³ it is safe to say that television stations have long used their influence to push certain political agendas and candidates. But as Kinzo and Dunkerley (2003: 313) explain, “it is now possible to conclude that other variables besides political manipulation are central to a full explanation of the political role of the media.” The authors describe the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions as diminishing the force of media manipulation, stating that “when democracy advances in society, oligopolistic media conglomerates like TV Globo⁴ have greater difficulty in maintaining their old instrumental interventions” (Kinzo and Dunkerley 2003: 313).

But while Brazilian television stations may have some power in the agenda setting and opinion formation of the average vote, there are still certain mechanisms present in the Brazilian media that are aimed at diminishing this perceived bias. I will discuss four of these mechanisms: the *Horario Eleitoral Gratuito*, the spread of

3 Media ownership is tightly connected with political power. Concessions to television and radio stations are normally given to local strongmen and politicians, creating the possibility of a system of limited accountability and transparency by media outlets.

4 TV Globo is Brazil's biggest media conglomerate.

computer technology and the internet, the creation of advocacy agencies, and the impact of newspapers.

First, the so-called *Horario Eleitoral de Propaganda Gratuita* (free political advertising time) is one of the ways created to provide a leveled playing field to Brazilian politicians. All Brazilian elections are preceded by this free advertising time in which television stations are required by law to provide a free unfiltered space for all politicians and parties running in the elections. No other democracy in the world gives more free time in the media to candidates than Brazil (Kinzo and Dunkerley 2003: 298). The *Horario Eleitoral* is an important democratic tool and it can, and has been used, to accuse candidates of corruption, as well as a respond to corruption allegations, providing another platform for voters to become informed.

Today Brazilian voters are becoming more aware and better educated about corruption in Brazil. In the past four years the media has increased the coverage of corruption issues making the issue even more visible to the average voter. Indeed, while the disparity of wealth is still considered the worst problem in Brazil, a greater number of Brazilians are starting to see corruption as the worst problem (Tautz 2006) and a recent survey showed that Brazilians see corruption as one of the five most important issues in Brazil today, together with healthcare, unemployment, poverty, and public safety (IBOPE 2006). While television is still the most widely used medium, with 90 percent of Brazilian households owning a television, the advent of new technologies such as the internet have provided new a powerful tool for

absorbing political information, bringing us to the second tool against TV bias. Table 1 shows us the evolution of the use of the internet by Brazilian citizens.

Table 1
Personal Computer User and Internet Use⁵

Year	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
Internet Users (per 1,000 people)	0.13	0.38	4.52	14.8	28.7	79.9	119.6
Personal Computers (per 1,000 people)	6.16	11.3	20.7	29.6	48.8	72.6	105.2

While roughly 12 percent of the population being internet users is still a low number, especially when looking at the USA (63 percent) and high income countries (54 percent), this number is still high when compared to other developing countries such as China (7 percent) and middle income countries (9 percent) (World Bank 2007). It is also important to note that by 2000 the number of internet users had surpassed the numbers of personal computers in the population, meaning that individuals without a computer were starting to use the internet. Such a phenomenon is most likely due to the increasing number of internet cafes installed in Brazil. The use of the internet has changed the political environment and access to information dramatically in the past 10 years, and in Brazil this is no different, which brings us to our third tool against TV bias: advocacy agencies. The spread of internet news and the development of advocacy agencies have been extremely important to the political education of Brazilians, and web-sites such as *Transparencia Brasil* have been key

⁵ Source: WDI online (World Bank 2007)

players in this process. An example of a new tool being used by voters is the program called *Excelências*, implemented by TB. This project was created in August 2006 to provide information about candidates seeking re-election for the Chamber of Deputies in the incoming October elections and it received around 7.4 million visits during that period, making this project a very successful tool for informing voters of a candidate's wrongdoings (Transparência Brasil 2007). But there are also other traditional media outlets that are important in Brazil today. Newspaper readership is an important aspect of voter information and dissemination of news about corruption. Newspapers are read by 49 percent of the population (IBOPE 2005c) and it is considered by this section of the population as their main source of information about politics and other issues.

The increased visibility of corrupt acts, together with technological changes experienced in the past 15 years, makes the argument that voters are uninformed or misinformed a weak one in the Brazilian system. There is still an issue of which individuals are obtaining this information and which ones are not. The urban-rural divide in Brazil is still present and while this issue will not be discussed in this section it will be taken in consideration in this research and it will be accounted for when testing the hypotheses.

The second issue to be discussed is the venal voter approach. The idea of a venal voter can also be translated to Brazilian politics but, like any corrupt activity, measuring the impact of venal voters is a hard task. Peters and Welch (1980) see venal voters as individuals who are capable of being corrupted. In Brazil, the idea of

venal voter can be directly associated with the vote buying issue. Speck (2003: 149) describes the vote buying issue as a relevant aspect of how voters choose their candidate. In a 2006 survey TB observed that four percent of the population was offered money to vote for a candidate in the October elections, while another four percent declared that they were offered some type of public good in exchange for their votes (Abramo 2007: 2). Based on the results of this survey we are able to see that vote buying is still practiced in Brazil but the influence of the venal voter and vote buying is highly debated. For some scholars, vote buying is a phenomenon that is diminishing in importance and it has no statistical significance; while others believe that it is a key factor for the distortion of the electoral process (Speck 2003: 154).

The last issue to be discussed is the idea that corruption is not the only issue voters consider when casting a vote. Peters and Welch (1980: 698) argue that “it is not accurate to assume that every voter uses it (corruption) as the sole criterion for electoral choice, regardless of partisanship or other issue considerations.” While this may be true in the U.S. voter perspective, does the same hold true in the Brazilian political environment, an environment where voters are becoming more aware of corruption issues and consequentially more conscious about the idea of corrupt politicians? I will argue that corruption is the most important issue that Brazilian voters will consider when casting their ballots. This will especially be true in an election such as the 2006 congressional election where two major scandals tarnished the credibility of a great number of Deputies and Senators.

The idea that corruption allegations will be an important, if not the most important issue voters will take in consideration when casting their vote is defended by Ferraz and Finan (2005) in their research focus on municipal audits in Brazilian cities. Based on their results, municipalities where the information about audits were readily available to voters were more prone to punish corrupt politicians than municipalities that did not provide the information to the public. Ferraz and Finan (2005: 23) argue that “in municipalities with more radio stations and higher levels of corruption, the information released by the audit program reduced re-election rates by 32 percent. In areas without radio stations, the audit program had no effect on the re-election rates of incumbent mayors.” Based on the same idea, I will argue that if voters are aware of the corruption allegations against members of Congress they will punish those corrupt politicians.

C. Brazilian Electoral Laws

The Brazilian political system has many characteristics making it a unique system that may make it more difficult to punish corrupt politicians during the elections. In regards to congressional elections there are a few aspects of the system that need to be addressed when studying voting behavior as well as when studying the behavior of politicians. These include the open list system, low party ID among voters, and other election rules.

C.1. The Open List System and the Personal Election Factor (Low Party ID)

Brazil's electoral rules for the Chamber of Deputies (*Câmara dos Deputados*) are slightly different from other countries' electoral rules for the equivalent institutions. While party-list or closed list proportional representation systems are more common, where a rank-order system is previously established by the party, the Brazilian system uses an open-list proportional representation, in which votes determine the candidates' position within each party. In the open list PR system voters cast a vote for one deputy and this vote cannot be transferred to other individuals. Seats are distributed first to parties based on the total number of votes obtained by their candidates, then to candidates within the parties based on the number of individual votes (Mainwaring 1991). Based on this election format voters will determine the order of candidates elected and the parties have no say in the matter. Such a system weakens party authority and promotes an individualistic campaign, as opposed to a platform based on programmatic or ideological issues (Power and Roberts 1995).

Another characteristic of the Chamber of Deputies election is the high number of candidates. According to Power and Roberts (1995: 799), "each party is allowed to present one and half candidates for each seat available, and interparty alliances increase the number of candidates permitted." Table 2 shows the number of candidates and the number of seats in selected states for the 2006 election:

Table 2
Candidates and Seats⁶

State	Seats	Candidates	Candidates/Seats
Sao Paulo	62	952	15.35
Rio de Janeiro	36	707	19.64
Acre	7	50	7.14
Tocantins	8	70	8.75
Bahia	39	216	5.54
Rio Grande do Sul	31	279	9.00

The high number of candidates together with the open list PR system creates an environment where individualism becomes the norm not only in legislative voting, but also in campaigning, leading to a system some call party underdevelopment (Samuels 2006). Not only does Brazil have a system that is highly individualistic but the system encourages party fragmentation. As a consequence of the aspects discussed above, Brazilian voters will generally vote for a candidate and not for the party. With the exception of the Worker's Party (PT), a party that experiences high party attachment around Brazilian voters, most over two thirds of Brazilian voters do not express any partisan identity (Samuels 2006).

The open list PR system, together with the high number of parties, create an environment in which the Chamber of Deputies elections are generally run on platforms that will promote clientelism, individualism, and personalism instead of programmatic appeals, making political campaigns focused on the candidate instead of on the political issues and consequentially making campaign expenditure an

⁶ Source: Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE 2006)

important part of the re-election equation. According to Samuels (2001: 33), “when candidates under open list proportional representation face increased intraparty competition, they must raise and spend money in order to stand out from the crowd.”

C.2. Chamber of Deputies Turnover and the New Election Rules

The turnover ratio in the Chamber of Deputies is high. In 1990 only 40% of incumbent deputies were reelected for the next term (Ames 1995) and in the 2006 elections a total of 52.4% of incumbents were reelected (DIAP 2006). It is important to note that not all incumbents ran for reelection, but the number is nevertheless high: 84.4% of incumbent deputies ran for a new term in 2006 (DIAP 2006). The high number of candidates running for reelection goes against the argument that deputies are not always interested in maintaining its position in Chamber. During the 1990s there was an assumption that politicians will seek to maximize income over their political career and consequentially move away from their deputy position in search of more profitable jobs and return to the Chamber at a later time (Ames 1995). The probability of losing the reelection campaign also may have played a role in the past elections but some changes in election rules in 2006 could have influenced the decision to run by some incumbents. New electoral rules pushed for a diminished campaign spending as well as the prohibition of billboards, t-shirts, and hats, making campaigns more favorable to candidates with established names- incumbents- and consequentially preventing some candidates that may have had good chances of being

elected from seriously looking into fighting for a seat in the Chamber (DIAP 2006). Nevertheless, candidates will most likely continue to spend a considerable amount of money in campaigns and this expenditure may play an important role in their chance for re-election.

While turnover is still high the odds may have been better for incumbents in the 2006 elections, encouraging more candidates to run for reelection. The reelection rates at the national level and at the state level must be taken in consideration when studying the impact of corruption accusations in incumbent candidates.

D. Brazilian Scandals

2005 and 2006 were years of political turmoil in Brazilian national politics. Two major political scandals involving many levels of government generated great discontent by the Brazilian population, and in these two scandals congress was the institution that had the greatest number of individuals involved. But were these scandals a clear case of corruption? In order to answer this question I will briefly describe the two incidents.

The first political scandal led to the creation of a new word in Brazil: *mensalão* (or “big monthly”). The scandal is a consequence of Congressman Roberto Jefferson’s allegations that the governing Worker’s Party (PT) had developed a plan to pay monthly “fees” as high as \$12,500 to congressmen from two parties, the Populist Party (PP) and the Liberal Party (PL) to ensure that congressmen from these

parties would vote to pass legislation deemed important to the government (Zobel 2005; Folha 2005a)⁷. At the initial time of the accusations, in June 2005, Jefferson did not provide any proof of this system, but as days went by new allegations and accusations started to appear in Brazilian media. Two examples of news related to Jefferson's accusation were the allegations by congressman Raquel Teixeira, of the Social Democratic Party (PSDB), that she was offered a large sum of money to switch political parties; and the allegation by Fernanda Sommaggio, a former secretary to entrepreneur Marcos Valerio, that suitcases full of money were transported to and from Valerio's advertising company and that these suitcases were most likely going to congressmen in Brasilia (Folha 2005a).

As a consequence of the allegations described above, a parliamentary investigation committee (*Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito* or CPI) was established to determine if such a system actually existed in the Chamber of Deputies. The investigation focused on 19 congressmen in connection to the *mensalão* system and eventually resulted in the expulsion of three congressmen, including the whistleblower Jefferson, who the commission concluded was one of the key members of the payoff system. Out of the 16 remaining congressmen accused, four resigned before being charged with anything (three of those were still able to run for re-election in the 2006 election), 11 were absolved from any guilt, and one investigation was still pending at election time in 2006.

⁷ Roberto Jefferson was the leader of the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) in 2005.

While the 11 absolved congressmen were considered innocent according to the CPI their reputations were considerably tarnished after the scandal. The media portrayed these politicians not as innocent men unfairly accused of a crime, but as criminals that were not charged due to the lack of evidence present. The population saw these politicians as part of the system regardless of the verdict given by the CPI, and while they were not fully charged for the accusations, it was believed that these congressmen were at fault somehow, and were involved, even if indirectly, with the whole system. In a survey conducted in June 2005, IBOPE (2005c) found that 43 percent of the population believed that there were many politicians involved in the scandal while only 3 percent believed that no politician was involved in the case, while 24 percent of the population believed that the Roberto Jefferson's accusation were completely true, 37 percent believed that most accusations were true, and only 10 percent believed that accusations were completely false.

According to Folha Online (2006), many deputies were accused of receiving money directly from Marcos Valerio's businesses but were able to explain why the money exchange was legal, but even though these politicians justified the legality of these transactions it was clear that most of them had direct contact with individuals known to be involved in the bribe scheme, making their credibility with the media and with voters diminish considerably. But even a tarnished reputation did not stop these congressmen from running for re-election, since 9 of the 11 accused were candidates in the 2006 elections.

The second scandal to rock Brazil's political world before the 2006 congressional elections also had a catchy nickname: *a máfia dos sanguessugas* (the blood-suckers mafia). Also known as the "ambulance mafia", this scandal involved entrepreneurs, both houses of Congress, the Health Ministry, and the Association of Municipalities of the Mato Grosso State. Brazil's Federal Police (PF) cracked down on a system that sold overpriced ambulances to municipalities across the country. In the system, mayors would request ambulances through a broker (an individual named Jose Wagner dos Santos) who promised to provide ambulances much quicker and without the bureaucracy of the "normal" channels. After mayors agreed on the system, deputies and senators would pass legislation approving the money for these ambulances that would be provided by Planam, a company specialized in ambulances, and given to the municipalities. The ambulances were overpriced by 10% and were not fully equipped, leaving the municipality with a not fully functioning ambulance (Recondo 2006).

In the process of providing these ambulances a number of individuals received *propinas* (bribes), and the investigation led the PF to believe congressmen were part of the group of individuals receiving bribes. The investigation was not fully completed by election time in 2006 but by that time the PF already had the names of 72 congressmen who were believed to be involved in this corruption ring. Out of the 72 congressmen accused 69 were federal deputies, and while two of these deputies resigned after these accusations reached the media the great majority ran for re-election in the 2006 elections.

So are the *Mensalão* and *Sanguessugas* scandals acts of corruption? Even if cultural differences and public opinion are considered, these two scandals will be considered corrupt acts. In these two events politicians were accused of misusing their public offices for private gain: *mensalão* accusations tied politicians to large sums of money offered to them as an inducement for voting a certain way in congress, while *sanguessugas* accusations tied politicians directly to bribes, while also connecting them to the provision of unsafe public goods (inefficient ambulances). In both instances, politicians are taking money for private gain by misusing (or abusing) their powers as public officials, making these two acts clear corrupt acts not only according to Lira's definition of corruption but also according to the reality of Brazilian public opinion. In the case of both scandals the public outcry was clear in the country, and none of these acts were taken lightly by the media and by the population.

III. Methods

The discussion of corruption allegations and voting behavior leads to one central question: Do voters punish corrupt politicians? But when looking at this question within the Brazilian political perspective it is necessary to take a few other factors in consideration. The possibility of changing parties, the access to information by voters, and the amount of money spent campaigning are all key aspects of Brazilian politics that need to be taken in consideration when asking the simple

question “do voters punish corrupt politicians?” This section will explore what questions should be asked in order to answer our original questions and what variables we will be using in order to answer these questions.

A. Research Question

Peters and Welch (1980) concluded that in some cases corruption accusations will lead to a diminished number of votes but that will not necessarily mean electoral defeat. The reasons for such a phenomenon are strongly related to the nature of U.S. politics where the bipartisan system, together with the perks of seniority by Congressmen, benefits certain politicians accused of corruption. While the Brazilian political system differs greatly from the U.S system, politicians may be able to lose some votes in Brazilian elections and still be re-elected if they are able to use the system to their advantage, mainly by switching parties and taking advantage of the possibility of needing less votes to be elected. While Brazilian Congressmen will not be able to sustain the same losses sustained by their U.S. counterparts⁸, they may nevertheless be able to absorb some of the impact of being accused of corruption.

Therefore this research will ask two specific questions summarized below:

⁸ According to Peters and Welch (1980: 704) certain incumbents may be able to sustain a loss of 2 to 3 percent. In many cases 2 to 3 percent of votes is what candidates need to be elected in Brazilian Congressional elections.

Hypothesis 1: Incumbents accused of corruption will have a lower probability of being re-elected than those who are not accused of corruption.

Hypothesis 2: Incumbents accused of corruption will have a higher probability of suffering a loss in the relative number of votes in 2006, compared to the 2002 election, than those who are not accused of corruption.

In order to test these hypotheses we will take in consideration the peculiarities of Brazilian politics and while some of these characteristics can be translated to the Brazilian system as a whole others are peculiar of the 2006 elections.

B. Corruption, Media Exposure, Campaign Finance, and Party Change

The 2006 elections were peculiar at least in one sense, the presence of two major corruption scandals. As election time got closer in October 2006, some of the Deputies accused of corruption in these two cases decide to not attempt re-election, but a great majority of these politicians ended up fighting for a new term. A total of 66 (out of 87) deputies accused of corruption in these two scandals ran for re-election, or 75 percent of the accused deputies. Taking the whole number of candidates running for re-election, including the ones accused of corruption, the rate of incumbent candidacy is 76 percent. Therefore we can assert that being accused of corrupt acts was not a deterrent in attempting re-election.

Taking this into consideration we need look at some other factors that may influence the outcome of the elections. This research focuses on the idea that corruption allegations in these two major political scandals will lead to the punishment of politicians, mainly through the ballot by voters that choose to not re-elect them. Nevertheless there are some other aspects that need to be addressed when determining the importance of corruption allegations when voters cast their ballot.

The *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* scandals rocked the political structure in Brazil. Corruption allegations from these two major scandals were diverse in terms of level of involvement and the home state of politicians being involved. When taking in consideration the *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* scandals, the accused politicians came from all parts of the country: out of the 27 states (26 plus the Distrito Federal) in the union only two states (Amazonas and Piauí) did not have direct involvement with the scandals. The high level of involvement (16 percent of Deputies involved in scandals) together with the high number of states involved in the scandals make this research question even more interesting.

Even though the number of candidates involved in the scandals is important there is one fact that will help determine if these accusations will actually lead to voter's indignation and that is media exposure. It doesn't matter how much money a politician earns irregularly if no one knows about, and therefore, we have to account for media exposure when discussing voting behavior amid corruption allegations. As it was stated in Part III the Brazilian voter is becoming more aware of corruption problems in the country, and the access to alternative media, such as the Internet, is

on the rise. But how can we measure media exposure? While newspaper readership in Brazil is lower than in most countries (Kinzo and Dunkerley 2003) I believe that measuring the number of articles targeting these corruption allegations is a good measure of media exposure. Newspaper articles are a good measure of what will be discussed in television shows the biggest medium in Brazil, and these two scandals were influential enough that proper coverage was given in other media outlets.

By measuring the number of articles related to both scandals and standardizing it (by dividing the number of news articles by the number of voters within a state) we are able to obtain a measure of which states provided more coverage of these issues, helping us in determining if the voter had access to information about corrupt politicians. In order to obtain these articles we used a project by TB called *Deu No Jornal*. In this project TB has compiled, since October 2004, all news articles that have any relationship with corruption among the major newspapers of all Brazilian states. Most states have at least two different newspapers that can be found in this database while some have three and even four different newspapers (Projeto Deu No Jornal 2007). By using this database we are able to get an idea of the exposure voters had to the corruption scandals and this exposure varied significantly from state to state.

Of course, there are other factors, besides corruption, that play a role in the re-election of politicians. As it has been discussed in Part II, Brazil's political system is highly personalistic and the great number of candidates running for the Federal Deputy position pushes candidates to spend a considerable amount of money in the

campaign process. While incumbents may have a little advantage over newcomers in the elections this advantage is not enough to guarantee re-election, as high turnover ratio shows. Therefore candidates need to make sure they are promoting their candidacy well enough to gain enough votes and the best way to guarantee high exposure is by spending campaign money in flyers, shirts, hats, and other promotional materials.

The need for promotion and the ensuing expenditure of campaign money can consequentially generate a need for big budget campaigns. Therefore, it is arguable that campaign expenditures can have a direct impact in a candidate's re-election chances. In order to measure campaign spending we will use information provided to TSE by all candidates in regards to their campaign spending. Such information is available at the TSE website and it provides detailed information about who gives candidates money, and how much they spend. In order to standardize campaign finance expenditures, I use a simple ratio that accounts for the number of voters in each state and consequentially create a number that better translates candidates spending.

The last factor to be considered in this research is party change. As discussed in Part II, the Brazilian political arena is known for being a personalistic system with weak party identification from voters. In a system that promotes individualistic platforms the strength of parties is diminished, making the possibility for party change more likely. Politicians change parties for several reasons including the

possibility of increasing changes for (re) election⁹. The discussion on Part II described a system in which competition among candidates within the same party is constant, consequentially creating incentive for politicians to change parties if this move will lead to fewer votes needed for a successful election. Between 1987 and 1990 a total of 40% of all deputies changed parties (Ames 1995) while 29% of all candidates running for re-election in 2006 changed parties between the 2002 elections and 2006. Therefore, it is necessary to account for the possibility that corrupt politicians are changing parties in order to guarantee their re-election even if their total votes diminish.

C. Variables

The discussion above provides us with enough information to determine what variables should be used in order to test our hypotheses. This section will briefly discuss the dependent and independent variables.

C.1. Dependent Variables and Statistical Analysis

In order to test Hypothesis 1 we will use a simple dichotomous variable for re-election (1=re-elected and 0=not re-elected), while for Hypothesis 2 we will use a

⁹ Politicians change parties for a variety of reasons, including: to create new parties, to change to a more favorable electoral coalition, and to rise to superior legislative functions (Kinzo 1993 and Kinzo and Dunkerley 2003).

continuous variable that is the difference between the percentage of valid votes in 2006 and 2002 for each candidate. By using percentage change in valid votes we are controlling for the variation in the number of voters. Brazil's compulsory voting system creates certain discrepancies in votes between elections due to the high number of absences as well as blank and null votes. Using only valid votes will provide us with a better measurement for the true difference in votes experienced by candidates.

C.2. Independent Variables

While the dependent variables will differ between Hypotheses 1 and 2 we will be using the same set of independent variables in order to predict the results. Section B above provided an extensive description of the factors being considered in this research and I will now clarify what variables we will take in consideration when predicting electoral results. I use four independent variables: (1) *Corruption allegation*; (2) *newspaper articles*; (3) *campaign spending*; and (4) *party change*.

The first variable being used is the key component of our central question. *Corruption allegation* will be measured as a dichotomous variable where we are defining allegation as the presence of the candidate's name on one of the lists distributed by various media outlets in Brazil. The list used in this research is a combination of a master list available at Folha Online (2006a; 2006b) containing all accused candidates in both political scandals. While these two scandals were not the

only cases of corruption accusations including incumbent candidates these scandals received more media attention than any other issue, making them a better indicator of political corruption accusation for the 2006 elections.

The variable newspaper *articles* controls for the difference in the level of information between states. As mentioned before, the urban-rural divide in Brazil is still noticeable and this issue will consequently lead to a difference in the level of information available to voters. Peters and Welch (1980), Welch and Hibbings (1997), and Ferraz and Finan (2005) agree that if voters are aware of a candidate's corruption they will most likely punish this individual, therefore it is important to acknowledge that the access to information may play an important role in how voters will react come election day. As described in section B, this variable has been standardized by creating a ratio of the number of newspaper articles regarding both the *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* in each state to the number of eligible voters in the 2006 elections. By standardizing in this way we are able to determine the intensity of news coverage of these scandals across states and consequentially controlling also for the urban-rural divide, since it is probable that voters in urban states (such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Minas Gerais) have more access to news articles about the corruption scandals than in rural states (such as Roraima, Rondonia, and Acre). I hypothesize that the relationship between the number of newspaper articles and candidate's re-election rates will be negative.

Campaign spending may also play an important role in a candidate's re-election chances. As discussed in part B, Brazilian electoral rules and the

personalistic nature of elections create an environment where campaign spending becomes an important way to generate name recognition and consequentially increase the number of votes. This variable is also standardized by creating a ratio of the amount of money spent in the elections (as reported to the TSE) relative to the number of eligible voters in the state. This is necessary in order to control for the higher spending that will be incurred by candidates in largely populated states such as Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Bahia, and São Paulo where the need for name recognition will be higher than in less populated states such as Acre, Roraima, Tocantins, and Amazonas. I hypothesize that the relationship between campaign spending and re-election rates is positive.

Our last variable is *party change*. This is a dichotomous variable (party change=1, no party change=0) that has been introduced to control for the effect of candidates switching parties in order to enter a party where the number of votes to be elected is lower than the number of votes that elected the candidate in the previous election at their previous party. While party change can be used in the way described above I hypothesize that such a change will not have a positive effect in the probability of re-election because candidates accused of corruption will incur a loss too high to be compensated by changing parties.

IV. Results

As discussed in Part II, the so-called re-election rate for the 2006 elections was 52.4 percent. But this number accounted for all incumbents, including deputies that decided not to run for re-election. By controlling for these deputies the re-election rate is a little higher, at 66 percent. The total re-election rate does not take to consideration the differences between candidates accused of corruption and those not accused; therefore it is important to show this difference before discussing the results of the hypotheses testing. Table 3 provides an initial picture of the difference between candidates accused of corruption and those deemed honest.

Table 3

Re-election Rates For Candidates Accused of Corruption

	Total	Re-elected	Re-election Ratio
Not Accused	324	239	74%
Accused	65	18	28%
Total	389	257	66%

Table 3 strongly suggests that candidates accused of corruption were re-elected at a much lower rate than candidates that were not accused of involvement in the two major scandals. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the corrupt politicians were punished in the 2006 elections. But were there other factors that played a role in this election? That is what our multivariate models will try to determine.

Table 4 shows the results of a logistic regression model used to test Hypothesis 1:

Table 4

Probability of Re-Election to Chamber of Deputies (Logit Estimates)

Variables	DV: Re-Election Coded 1 or 0 (Logit Estimate)	
	B	Odds Ratio
Corruption	-1.98 (0.32***)	0.14
Newspaper Articles	-1.19 (0.47**)	0.3
Spending	0.004 (0.001***)	1.004
Party Change	-0.61 (0.25**)	0.54
Constant	1.18 (0.21***)	----
Pseudo R ²	0.16	
Log Likelihood	-206.4	
N	389	
*p ≤ 0.10	**p ≤ 0.05	***p ≤ 0.01

Based on the results above it seems clear that the corruption allegations of 2005 and 2006 had a strong negative impact on the chances of re-election. The results confirm that the two most influential factors affecting re-election in 2006 were campaign spending and the candidate's situation in regard to the *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* scandals. According to the results seen in Table 4, being accused of corruption reduces the odds of a candidate's chance of re-election by 0.14 and for every standard deviation increase in campaign spending per 1,000 voters will increase the odds for re-election a little over one time (1.004 times).

Access to information also appears to be a good determinant of re-election: as the number of news articles increase the likelihood for re-election diminishes.

According to the results on Table 4 for every standard deviation change in the number of articles the odds of re-election diminishes by 0.3, making the access to information an important factor in the 2006 elections. While the *articles* variable does not make a difference between candidates accused of corruption and those deemed honest, I will discuss this difference later in this section.

While changing parties had a negative impact on the re-election chances of candidates it is impossible to determine based on this model if this party change had a greater impact in candidates accused of corruption. A total of 111 candidates switched parties between the 2002 and the 2006 elections, and only 22 of those (120 percent) were accused of corruption in 2006. When considering only corrupt candidates that meant that 33 percent of the corrupt politicians changed parties, while 30 percent of non corrupt politicians changed parties. In other words, roughly the same proportion of corrupt and non corrupt candidates changed parties between 2002 and 2006, leading to another important question: How did changing parties affect these two distinct types of candidates? Table 5 provides some answers to this question.

Table 5

Corrupt and “Honest” Candidates: The Differences

Variables	Re-election Estimates (Re-election=1, no re-election=0)			
	Corrupt Candidates		Non-corrupt Candidates	
	b	Odds Ratio	b	Odds Ratio
Newspaper Articles	-1.44 (-1.004)	0.23	-1.27 (0.55**)	0.27
Spending	0.005 (0.002**)	1.005	0.005 (0.001***)	1.005
Party Change	-1.81 (0.84**)	0.16	-0.43 (-0.28)	0.65
Constant	-0.45 (-0.49)	---	1.13 (-0.24)	---
Pseudo R ²	0.15		0.05	
Log Likelihood	-33.62		-172.6	
N	66		323	

*p ≤ 0.10 **p ≤ 0.05 ***p ≤ 0.01

Table 5 shows three peculiarities. First, this regression shows that campaign spending had roughly the same impact for both corrupt and non-corrupt candidates. Second, the number of newspaper articles seems to have a negative effect on the re-election of non-corrupt politicians. Third, changing parties seem to only have a negative impact on the re-election chances of corrupt politicians. While the campaign spending results were predicted, it is interesting to see that the *newspaper articles* variable has a negative impact on non-corrupt politicians, decreasing the odds of re-election of non-corrupt politicians by 0.27 for every standard deviation increase in the number of articles. This negative relationship may be due to the fact that corruption allegations make the population distrust politicians in general creating distrust even

towards non-corrupt politicians. Politicians are highly distrusted by the population, as we can see in Table 6.

Table 6
Distrust of Institutions and Actors in Brazil

Inst.	TV	Senate	Chamber	Parties	Army	Unions	Politicians	Police	Judiciary
2003	44%	57%	63%	-	26%	-	-	-	44%
May 2005	34%	71%	74%	85%	20%	32%	87%	52%	40%
August 2005	40%	76%	81%	88%	27%	44%	90%	61%	51%

The Chamber of Deputies and politicians in general experienced an increase in distrust after the *mensalão* scandal, to be expected after a major national scandal such as this one. But what is astonishing is that the Brazilian population distrusts political institutions and individuals involved in politics, but their opinions are not so harsh towards other institutions often considered corrupt, such as the judiciary and the police. As I have argued above I believe that this extreme distrust in politicians will create a negative effect for all incumbents, including candidates that were not directly charged of corruption, consequently creating a negative electoral impact on these politicians.

In regards to party change the comparison between corrupt candidates and non-corrupts shows us not only that changing parties did not increase the probability of re-election, but it actually decreased the odds of re-election for corrupt politicians by 0.16. This negative relationship can be explained by the fact that these two scandals were highly publicized and voters could see that candidates seeking to

change party close to the election are most likely trying to minimize the loss of votes. Therefore, changing parties has a negative impact on corrupt politicians while not being statistically significant to non-corrupt politicians.

Based on the results discussed above, we fail to reject our first hypothesis, that corrupt politicians have a lower probability of re-election. When analyzing the results it is possible to see that information about the scandals played a role in a candidate's re-election chances, and that this information was also detrimental to candidates not accused of corruption, mainly due to the fact that politicians in general were less trusted. The results also show that campaign improves re-election prospects for both corrupt and non-corrupt candidates, and that party change only affects corrupt candidates negatively.

In regards to Hypothesis 2, Table 7 shows the change in votes between the 2006 and 2002 elections and what variables are significant in predicting this change:

Table 7

Determinants of Vote Difference

Variables	DV: Percentage Change Votes (OLS Estimate)	
	b	(SE)
Corruption	-0.72	0.19***
Newspaper Articles	-0.96	0.24***
Spending	-0.001	0.0004***
Party Change	-0.05	0.15
Constant	0.04	0.12
Adjusted R ²	0.09	
F-Value	11.16***	
N	389	
*p≤ 0.10	**p≤ 0.05	***p≤ 0.01

The results provide a similar outcome to those in Table 4. Interestingly, the *party change* variable had no significant impact on the variation in votes for politicians. However, this result was somewhat predictable due to the fact that party identification is low in Brazil. While the party membership will have an impact on the election itself, due to Brazilian political rules, this impact is not likely to be seen when measuring only votes in an election.

However, the other three variables are highly significant in our regression, meaning that being corrupt has a negative impact in re-election chances, voters' access to information has a direct negative impact in the percentage votes a candidate will receive, and, of course, campaign spending has a positive effect on the number of votes a candidate will receive. But what if we divide corrupt and non-corrupt politicians in two separate groups? Table 8 provides us the comparison between the two groups.

Table 8

Corrupt and "Honest" Politicians: The Difference in Numbers

Variables	Re-election Estimates (Re-election=1, no re-election=0)			
	Corrupt Candidates		Non-corrupt Candidates	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Newspaper Articles	-1.77	0.41***	-0.51	0.3*
Spending	0.003	0.001***	0.0008	0.0004*
Party Change	0.12	0.36	-0.16	0.17
Constant	-0.4	0.3	-0.05	0.13
Adjusted R ²	0.24		0.01	
F	7.88***		2.24*	
N	66		323	
*p ≤ 0.10	**p ≤ 0.05	***p ≤ 0.01		

Again, the results on Table 8 bring us to a similar conclusion than the one found in Hypothesis 1. Voter information has a negative impact in the number of votes received and this impact is much higher on corrupt candidates, spending has a positive impact on both types of candidates but being a more important aspect for corrupt politicians, and party change has no significant impact on the number of votes a candidate will receive.

Based on the results seen in table 7 and 8, we fail to reject Hypothesis 2, that incumbents accused of corruption will have a higher probability of vote loss than incumbents that were not accused of corruption. Again, access to information plays an important role in the ability candidates have to obtain votes, and campaign spending is also an important factor when determining the number of votes a candidate will have.

V. Conclusion

This research has illustrated two important traits of Brazilian congressional elections. First, just as in the U.S. Congressional elections, charges of corruption will have an impact on votes. Both Peters and Welch (1980) and Welch and Hibbing (1997: 237) found that “corruption charges rarely cause incumbent U.S. Representatives to resign, retire, or lose in primary races, but they do often cause them to lose votes and occasionally elections in November.” This research found that involvement in the *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* scandals had a negative impact on a

candidate's votes and chances of re-election, showing that Brazilian voters also punish corrupt politicians come election time. The impact on the number of votes a candidate loses because of corruption allegations can be smaller in Brazil than in the United States, but Brazilian election rules magnify the impact of losing votes, and while, according to Welch and Hibbing (1997: 227), U.S. Congressmen can "survive the loss of 6 to 11 percent in electoral margins," the same is not true in Brazilian politics, where the highest percentage of votes earned in 2006 was 10.35 percent and candidates were re-elected with as low as 1500 votes, equivalent to 0.01 percent in the state of São Paulo (TSE 2006).

Second, this research showed that being accused of corruption may not be enough to cost candidates the elections, especially in areas where information is not accessible to all voters. Just as Ferraz and Finan (2005: 23) found, "voters, once empowered with information, will hold corrupt politicians accountable." This research has also showed that the access to information will be an important determinant of the impact of corruption allegations on a candidate's re-election chances. The *mensalão* and *sanguessugas* scandals were highly publicized in Brazil, providing voters with enough information to punish politicians that they deemed corrupt. It seems clear that voters did take corruption allegations into account when casting their votes, since only 5 of the 50 candidates accused in the *sanguessugas* scandal were re-elected (Terra Online 2006) and access to information was important in these cases: based on the results found in this research the number of newspaper

articles published about the scandals had a negative impact on a candidate's chance for re-election.

While this research takes into consideration a variety of factors in a candidate's chances for re-election, such as campaign spending and party change, there are still a few factors that were not explored here and that may need to be revisited when analyzing Brazilian congressional elections. There are three factors in particular that I believe need to be discussed in future literature: (1) *Regional differences*, (2) *the venal voter effect*, and (3) *seniority*. While *regional differences* were taken into account when the number of newspaper articles published was standardized by state, there are other underlying regional factors that can play a role in Brazilian congressional elections. Just like in other large democracies, Brazilian politics vary greatly regionally. It is a common understanding that the North and Northeast regions are known for *coronelismo*¹⁰, a system that tends to be more personalistic than the ones in states from the southern region of Brazil. While it is possible to add a dichotomous variable accounting for the North and Northeast regions (see appendix) this simple approach fails to account for the variations of *coronelismo* within states. The *venal voter effect* was discussed in this research but it was not implemented as one of the variables mainly due to the fact that measuring the impact of the venal voter, more specifically the issue of vote buying in Brazil, is

¹⁰ *Coronelismo* is a term used to define how rural landowners exercised control over politics in the early nineteenth century, but the term has evolved to a description of how powerful individuals exercise power over the people in developing states in Brazil, especially in the North and Northeast regions (see Flynn 1978; Kinzo 1993; and Von Mettenheim 1995). Today the term is used to describe, as Von Mettenheim (1995: 32) argues, the clientelistic approach to politics used in those regions "as a mechanism for organizing municipal, regional, and federal power."

somewhat complex. Future research in this area needs to account for this issue. The third factor that needs to be taken in consideration is *seniority*¹¹. While turnover rates are normally around 50 percent in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, there are still a number of deputies that have been members of congress for 4 or more mandates and this may also be an important aspect in a candidate's re-election chances.

In conclusion, this research adds to the growing literature of corruption and voting behavior by comparing results from others studies in U.S. politics with results found in the Brazilian political environment. The findings of this research echo the research on U.S. Congressional elections: Brazilian voters will punish corrupt politicians, and access to information is very important, especially in a country like Brazil where regional disparities are high. This study opens the door for further research not only regarding Brazilian congressional elections but also regarding corruption and voting behavior in a comparative perspective. Understanding what makes voters punish corrupt politicians is an important aspect of voting behavior studies especially when analyzing developing democracies such as Brazil. Furthermore, studies such as this one should be done in other developing democracies.

¹¹ Data regarding seniority in the Chamber of Deputies was not readily available. The author plans to collect data on seniority and revisit this research.

Appendix

By adding the *coronelismo* dichotomous variables (1= *coronelismo* state¹², 0= non *coronelismo* state) to the multivariate models used to test our hypotheses, the results seen in Tables 9 and 10 show the impact of the added variable:

Table 9

Adding *Coronelismo* to Probability of Re-election (Logit Estimates)

Variables	DV: Re-Election Coded 1 or 0 (Logit Estimate)	
	B	Odds Ratio
Corruption	-1.98	0.13 (0.32***)
Newspaper Articles	-1.22	0.3 (0.47**)
Spending	0.005	1.004 (0.001***)
Party Change	-0.61	0.54 (0.25**)
Coronelismo	-0.17	0.84 (0.23)
Constant		(0.22***)
Pseudo R ²	0.16	
Log Likelihood	-208.9	
N	389	
*p ≤ 0.10	**p ≤ 0.05	***p ≤ 0.01

¹² *Coronelismo* states are all states from the North and Northeast regions.

Table 10

Adding *Coronelismo* to Determinants of Vote Difference

Variables	DV: Percentage Change Votes (OLS Estimate)	
	b	(SE)
Corruption	-0.72	0.19***
Newspaper Articles	-0.97	0.24***
Spending	0.001	0.0004***
Party Change	-0.05	0.15
Coronelismo	-0.34	0.13
Constant	0.04	0.12
Adjusted R ²	0.1	
F-Value	10.18***	
N	389	
*p≤ 0.10	**p≤ 0.05	***p≤ 0.01

Tables 9 and 10 show us results very similar to the results seen in Tables 4 and 7. Adding the dichotomous *coronelismo* variable did not affect the other variables significantly and it showed that the simplification of the regional differences among Brazilian regions does not impact a candidate's chance of re-election or change in votes. This result leads to one of two conclusions: either regional differences are not significant or the dichotomous variable used to describe these differences is not valid. I argue that regional differences are influential but it is necessary to create or find a better variable to measure these differences.

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