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## Misperceived social norms and political accountability: Evidence and theory

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**MISPERCEIVED SOCIAL NORMS  
AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY:  
EVIDENCE AND THEORY**

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# Misperceived Social Norms and Political Accountability: Evidence and Theory\*

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## Abstract

Electoral accountability is a cornerstone of democratic governance, yet whether voters effectively punish corruption remains theoretically and empirically contested. While canonical models predict that corruption revelations reduce incumbent support, strategic voting considerations—especially beliefs about others’ behavior—can yield ambiguous accountability outcomes. We exploit a major corruption scandal involving Japan’s ruling party during a national election to examine how social information shapes electoral responses to misconduct. In a pre-registered field experiment, we randomly provided voters with information about prevailing social norms of intolerance toward the scandal. This intervention significantly increased overall turnout and challenger support, particularly among swing voters, consistent with enhanced accountability. Yet the same treatment increased incumbent support among ruling-party loyalists. We show that these heterogeneous effects are systematically driven by voters’ prior beliefs about others’ voting intentions: those expecting others to punish sanctioned more when learning they would not, whereas those expecting tolerance defended more when learning others would punish. These findings reconcile conflicting evidence on electoral accountability by showing how strategic considerations fundamentally shape democratic sanctioning, and suggest that information campaigns can either strengthen

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or undermine accountability depending on the distribution of voter expectations, with important implications for anti-corruption interventions.

*Keywords:* Political accountability, corruption, misperception, social norm, strategic voting, moral, partisan identity, information campaign

# 1 Introduction

Democracy has played a central role in modern economic development ([Acemoglu et al., 2019](#)). Elections, a core institution of democracy, enable voters to hold politicians accountable by removing corrupt or underperforming incumbents ([Barro, 1973](#); [Ferejohn, 1986](#); [Persson and Tabellini, 2000](#); [Besley, 2006](#)). When this mechanism works as intended, it disciplines leaders and enhances governance quality.

However, whether democratic institutions fulfill this function in practice remains unclear. While canonical models of electoral accountability predict that voters will punish corruption, real-world outcomes often defy these expectations. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi faced repeated corruption charges and convictions yet continued to return to power ([Reuters, 2023](#)). In the 2024 U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts, yet his support remained largely unchanged ([Associated Press, 2024](#)). In India, 46 percent of newly elected Lok Sabha MPs in 2024 had declared criminal cases against them ([India Today, 2024](#)). These patterns raise important questions about why, despite opportunities for accountability, voters frequently return corrupt politicians to office.<sup>1</sup>

The literature offers potential explanations, including lack of credible information (e.g., [Ferraz and Finan, 2011](#); [Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2017](#)), corruption-competence trade-offs (e.g., [Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2013](#); [Vera, 2020](#)), group loyalty (e.g., [Banerjee and Pande, 2009](#); [Anduiza et al., 2013](#); [Solaz et al., 2019](#)), absence of credible clean alternatives (e.g., [Pavão, 2018](#); [Agerberg, 2020](#)), clientelism and vote-buying (e.g., [Bobonis et al., 2025](#); [Bøttkjær and Justesen, 2021](#)), and cynicism or tolerance of corrupt norms (e.g., [Klašnja and Tucker, 2013](#); [Vera, 2020](#)). However, most of these accounts analyze voting decisions in isolation, raising the question of how strategic considerations about others' behavior may promote or undermine political accountability.

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<sup>1</sup> The reelection of corrupt politicians is well-documented in countries such as Italy, Japan, and the United States (see, e.g., [Rundquist et al., 1977](#); [Reed, 1996](#); [Chang et al., 2010](#)).

Such strategic considerations are crucial for understanding political accountability. Party loyalists, for example, may reelect a corrupt incumbent rather than risk an opposition victory, or abstain if they expect fellow loyalists to secure the incumbent’s win. Strategic voting—where individuals condition their choices on expected behaviors of others—is common across electoral settings (see, e.g., [Cox, 1997](#); [Kawai and Watanabe, 2013](#); [Eggers and Vivyan, 2020](#)). Yet, while strategic voting is well studied in other contexts, workhorse models of electoral accountability typically assume sincere voting and abstract from such considerations of others’ behavior. This theoretical gap is significant because strategic incentives can either amplify or attenuate accountability pressures, making the net effect on democratic sanctioning theoretically ambiguous.

Strategic voting necessarily involves making inferences about others’ behavior. Yet voters may misjudge these behaviors—over- or underestimating, for instance, general tolerance for corruption and thus the likelihood that others will punish a corrupt incumbent. Recently, a growing body of research shows that individuals often misperceive others across diverse contexts.<sup>2</sup> In voting contexts, for instance, [Gerber et al. \(2020\)](#) find that voters substantially overestimate the likelihood of close elections, while [Carlson and Hill \(2022\)](#) show that individuals hold biased expectations about how a hypothetical, randomly selected peer would vote.<sup>3</sup> Such misperceptions can distort expectations about collective behavior and, in turn, shape individual decisions about whether to vote or whom to support.

Building on these insights, we examine how voters’ perceptions of others’ attitudes toward corruption interact with strategic considerations to affect electoral accountability. We examine this research question through an online survey experiment conducted in Japan in the run-up to the October 2024 general election for the Lower House, during one of the most prominent political corruption scandals implicating the ruling party in recent decades. The study exploits variation in voters’ perceived social norms: individuals in the treatment group received information about the aggregate level of public disapproval toward the scandal, while those in the control group did not. The treatment was designed to shift beliefs about prevailing norms while holding information about the scandal itself constant. We

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<sup>2</sup> [Bursztyn and Yang \(2022\)](#) provide a recent review.

<sup>3</sup> Beyond voting behavior, prior research has documented misperceptions about polarization ([Levendusky and Malhotra, 2016](#)), policy disagreement ([Chambers et al., 2005](#)), public opinion ([Mildenberger and Tingley, 2019](#)), ideological extremity ([Ahler, 2014](#)), and partisan stereotyping ([Ahler and Sood, 2018](#)).

analyze how this information updates beliefs and influences voting behavior.

We find that our information treatment increased turnout and support for challengers, particularly among swing voters. Among ruling party loyalists, however, the same information had the opposite effect: it increased support for incumbents. We also find that these heterogeneous reactions stem from differences in initial beliefs about others’ voting behavior.

The estimated treatment effect on turnout is sizable—around six percentage points. The figure is comparable to the benchmark effects from large-scale voter mobilization campaigns in the United States (e.g., [Gerber and Green, 2000](#); [Gerber et al., 2008](#)). This effect is especially notable given the non-personalized and non-coercive nature of our intervention. We discuss potential explanations for this result.

Interestingly, heterogeneity analysis reveals that the effects on turnout and challenger support are observed in districts where the incumbent is not implicated in the scandal, suggesting a spillover effect of the treatment on incumbents who are themselves clean but from the same party as implicated candidates. In addition, we find strong punishment, especially by swing voters, in districts with implicated incumbents.

Next, to interpret these patterns, we propose a simple model of electoral accountability with strategic considerations about others and empirically assess its predictions. First, we find that the increase in turnout is not driven by an average increase in individual perceptions of pivotality. Rather, we find that the increase in the *precision* of such perceptions seems to explain it.

These findings have implications for studies examining the relationship between pivotality and turnout. Lab experiments (e.g., [Levine and Palfrey, 2007](#); [Duffy and Tavits, 2008](#); [Agranov et al., 2018](#)) find that expected closeness increases participation. [Bursztyn et al. \(2024\)](#) show that tighter polls boost turnout in Swiss referenda. However, field experiments yield more mixed results: [Enos and Fowler \(2014\)](#) and [Gerber et al. \(2020\)](#) find limited evidence that emphasizing closeness increases turnout. Our information treatment increased turnout not by raising average perceived pivotality, but by reducing the dispersion of pivotality beliefs. This precision-based channel offers a new perspective on how information influences voter turnout.

Beyond the mechanisms related to perceived pivotality, we consider two key mechanisms. First, we introduce *moral reinforcement*, which connects to the literature on the role of

morals in voting (e.g., [Enke, 2020](#); [Walter and Redlawsk, 2019](#)). A key novelty of our model is that we explicitly incorporate the *moral costs* of supporting corrupt politicians. Second, we introduce *identity reinforcement*, which arises when norm signals are perceived as a threat to a voter’s partisan identity, prompting loyalists to defensively support the incumbent. While previous studies show that partisan loyalty leads citizens to judge corruption more leniently when it affects their own party (e.g., [Anduiza et al., 2013](#); [Solaz et al., 2019](#)), our analysis shows that corruption information can trigger defensive behavior when loyalists expect others to punish the corrupt politician, thereby counteracting electoral accountability. Crucially, both the defensive response among loyalists and the mobilization response among swing voters stem from our information treatment conveying *others’* perceptions rather than information about corruption *per se*. We find evidence consistent with both mechanisms.

A growing literature examines how to improve political accountability. Prior research has demonstrated that increasing transparency through audits can reduce corruption and lower the re-election rates of corrupt incumbents ([Ferraz and Finan, 2008](#); [Bobonis et al., 2016](#); [Avis et al., 2018](#)). A related line of work studies how information about politicians’ past performance shapes voter behavior through field and survey experiments, yielding mixed results (e.g., [Banerjee et al., 2011](#); [Chong et al., 2015](#); [Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2017](#); [Buntaine et al., 2018](#); [Dunning et al., 2019](#); [Adida et al., 2020](#); [Cruz et al., 2020](#); [Arias et al., 2022](#); [de Figueiredo et al., 2023](#); [Acemoglu et al., 2024](#)). For instance, [Banerjee et al. \(2011\)](#) find that providing information about candidate performance and qualifications increased turnout. By contrast, [Chong et al. \(2015\)](#) find reductions in both turnout and challenger support due to their information treatment. [Dunning et al. \(2019\)](#) report null average effects across seven randomized experiments in six countries. These mixed findings highlight the need for further evidence on how voters process political information—a gap this study addresses.

Despite these advances, relatively little research examines how voters’ beliefs about others shape political behavior. For example, [Arias et al. \(2022\)](#) show that prior beliefs about political malfeasance moderate voters’ responses to new information, but focus exclusively on individuals’ own beliefs about politicians. We extend this literature by demonstrating that voters’ beliefs about prevailing intolerance norms can influence turnout and vote choice. Unlike [Chong et al. \(2015\)](#), we find that providing intolerance norms information did not

crowd out turnout or challenger support. Rather, our treatment increased them, especially among swing voters. These effects are sizable, highlighting the potential effectiveness of information treatments that heighten the moral costs of supporting corrupt politicians.

We also contribute to a growing literature on how perceptions of others shape political behavior. Prior work shows that beliefs about others affect political contributions ([Perez-Truglia and Cruces, 2017](#)), protest ([Cantoni et al., 2019](#)), activism ([Hager et al., 2023](#)), and climate action ([Andre et al., 2024](#)). We extend this literature by demonstrating that perceptions of others also influence electoral behavior.

## 2 Background

Since its founding in 1955, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has dominated Japanese politics, losing power only briefly in 1993–1994 and 2009–2012. Between 2023 and 2024, the LDP was at the center of a major political scandal. The scandal involved allegations that three major party factions—the Abe, Nikai, and Kishida factions—failed to properly disclose over 970 million yen (about 6.5 million USD) in political funds, violating mandated finance disclosure regulations and raising suspicions that the funds were used as personal slush funds. The scandal is widely regarded as the most serious case of political corruption in modern Japanese politics (e.g., [Yomiuri Shimbun, 2024](#); [NPR, 2023](#)).

Public backlash was swift. By February 2024, the LDP’s approval rating had dropped to 21%—its lowest since returning to power in 2012 ([Asahi Shimbun, 2024](#)). In the October 2024 general election, the LDP and its coalition partner Komeito lost their Lower House majority for the first time since 2009. The LDP’s seats fell from 237 to 191, and 28 of the 46 politicians implicated in the scandal lost their races. The result dealt a significant blow to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who had taken office just weeks earlier on October 1, 2024.



## 3 Experimental Design

### 3.1 Overview

Our pre-registered experiment (AEARCTR-0014635) took place between October 18th and 31st, 2024, while the election occurred on October 27th. Our study consisted of three surveys: a baseline survey, a post-treatment survey, and an endline survey. Figure 1 presents an overview of the survey timeline. The baseline survey was conducted between the 18th and 23rd, the information intervention and post-treatment survey took place between the 25th and 26th, and the endline survey was administered between the 28th and 31st. The election occurred on the 27th (Sunday).

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how voters’ perceptions of others’ attitudes influence their own voting behavior. To this end, we implemented a randomized information intervention between the baseline and post-treatment surveys. The core feature of this intervention was the provision of information about the prevailing social norm—specifically, participants were shown aggregate attitudes toward corruption, as measured in the baseline survey.

Under strategic considerations, voters form beliefs about how intolerant their fellow citizens are of corruption and adjust their turnout and ballot choices accordingly. Our information treatment targets precisely those beliefs: by revealing the aggregate norm, it changes voters’ perceptions of others’ attitudes. That updated view, in turn, produces the observed shifts in turnout and vote choice. Examining this process is essential for understanding how voters’ considerations of others shape electoral outcomes.

Figure 2 reproduces the intervention screen shown to participants. Combining text with a simple graphic, the screen reported the baseline social norm: on average, respondents believed that 67% of other voters regarded the scandal as unacceptable.

Further details of the overall survey design are provided below.

### 3.2 Survey procedure and questionnaires

Participants were informed at the outset that the surveys were related to the upcoming election, conducted for academic research by university researchers, and that no moral judg-

ment would be made based on their responses. To avoid the experimenter demand effect, the general but specific purpose of the surveys was disclosed. Participant anonymity was guaranteed, and they were free to withdraw from the experiment at any time.

To facilitate completion, we limited the number of survey questions as much as possible and kept the questions clear and straightforward to avoid complications or confusion.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in addition to a baseline participation reward, payments increased toward the end of the experiment. By completing all surveys, participants could earn up to 65 points (one point is equivalent to one JPY).

We also incentivized certain questions to encourage truth-telling and minimize the experimenter demand effect, following the approach of [Krupka and Weber \(2013\)](#). Questions were incentivized by informing participants in advance that questions with a special icon were bonus questions, and 100 participants who answered them correctly would receive an additional 100 points.<sup>5</sup>

**Screening & Baseline survey (October 18th).** Before conducting the baseline survey, screening questions were administered. The screening questions included postal code, whether the respondent had already voted in early voting, and an attention-check question. Those who did not live in the target constituencies, had already voted, or did not pass the attention-check question did not continue to the baseline survey. For those who proceeded to the baseline survey, we asked about their demographics and questions related to politics and policy. The baseline survey contained 11 questions in total.

- *Measuring prior beliefs for the intervention screen.* In the baseline survey, one question asked about respondents' perceptions regarding the proportion of other voters who consider the slush fund issue unacceptable:

This survey project brings together a diverse group of participants, whose responses can be said to represent the views and attitudes of the average voter in

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<sup>4</sup> The baseline survey, which includes the most questions, contains only 11 questions and is designed to be completed within 5 minutes.

<sup>5</sup> The decision to limit incentives to 100 participants was made solely for practical reasons. Specifically, when contracting with the survey firm, it was necessary to determine the total payment amount, including participant compensation, in advance. By capping the number of incentivized respondents at 100, we were able to fix the overall cost. Although participants were not informed of this operational constraint, the incentive structure remained intact in that each respondent's compensation was still contingent on their truthful reporting.

Japan.

Regarding the following question, how many out of 100 participants do you think answered “Completely unacceptable” or “Somewhat unacceptable”?

<Question> To what extent can you tolerate issues such as omissions in political fund balance reports or kickbacks from political funds?

<Answer> 1. Completely unacceptable 2. Somewhat unacceptable 3. Somewhat acceptable 4. Completely acceptable

To the above question, I believe that ( ) out of 100 people answered “1. Completely unacceptable” or “2. Somewhat unacceptable.”

Respondents entered a number from 0 to 100, and these values were used to create the intervention screen.

We intentionally designed the survey question to incentivize respondents to provide their best estimate of social norms, regardless of their personal attitudes toward corruption—that is, respondents were encouraged to make their best guess even if they personally viewed the slush fund issue as acceptable or unacceptable. We then averaged these perceptions to define the prevailing social norm (67%) used in the subsequent analyses.

**Intervention & Post-treatment survey (October 25th).** We first showed the treatment group our intervention screen explained above. In contrast, the control group proceeded without receiving any additional information, as it is called passive design by [Haaland et al. \(2023\)](#). The post-treatment survey was administered immediately afterward and asked about the intended voting behavior and posterior beliefs. There were a total of eight questions. Both the treatment and control groups were asked the same set of questions.

**Endline survey (October 28th).** One day after the election, the endline survey asked both groups two questions about actual voting behavior: whether respondents voted, and if so, for which political party candidate.

Table A.1 in the Online Appendix shows the variables used in the analysis based on surveys administered after the treatment. All survey questions (originally in Japanese) and

their English translations are also provided in the Online Appendix.

### 3.3 Sample

We conducted the experiment in collaboration with *Myvoice Inc.*. The target population consisted of 2,800 registered individuals aged between their 20s and 60s in target constituencies in Japan.

These constituencies fall into two types, both of which had incumbent candidates from the LDP: *fraud districts*, where the incumbent politicians were involved in the slush fund issue, and *clean districts*, where the incumbent politicians were not involved.<sup>6</sup>

We determined this target sample size through a power calculation described in the PAP. The final sample includes 10 fraud districts and 15 clean districts. The details of the selection process for the target constituencies are provided in Section A.1 of the Online Appendix. As shown in Figure A.1 in the Online Appendix, these constituencies are distributed across various regions. We use the combined sample from both types of constituencies in the main analysis (Section 5.2). Heterogeneous effects between these constituencies are examined in Section 5.2.3.

Due to limitations in the demographic characteristics of the survey company’s registered sample pool, we conducted stratified sampling based on constituency types. Table A.2 in the Online Appendix compares these constituencies with others, demonstrating that they are similar to each other and also to non-targeted constituencies, whether or not the incumbents were implicated in the slush fund issue. It is also worth noting that the vote shares for the LDP and the Constitutional Democratic Party (DP, the largest opposition party) are each approximately one quarter, with the LDP holding a slightly larger share.

### 3.4 Balance and attrition

We conducted a statistical test (t-test) to check the balance between the treatment and control groups. The variables used to check the balance were pre-specified in the PAP. Table A.3 in the Online Appendix shows that all variables, except for educational attainment,

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<sup>6</sup> Japan is divided into 289 single-member constituencies, each with roughly 364,000 registered voters on average (as of October 1st, 2024). A constituency is smaller than a prefecture (47 in total) but larger than a municipality (1,741).

are balanced at a false discovery rate of 0.05. Following the PAP, we included this variable as a baseline control in the subsequent regression analyses.

We also checked the balance between attritors and non-attritors using the same set of variables. Table A.4 in the Online Appendix shows the result. First, the number of attritors after the treatment is impressively low (95/2280 or 4%). Second, the table shows that all variables, except gender and marital status, are balanced at a false discovery rate of 0.05. As pre-specified in the PAP, we computed bounds using the method proposed by [Lee \(2009\)](#).

The summary statistics of the final sample are provided in Table A.5 in the Online Appendix.

## 4 Empirical Strategy

In the main regression analyses, we estimate the following model using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS):

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta T_i + \mathbf{X}_i \gamma + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

for individual  $i$ , where  $y_i$  is the outcome,  $T_i$  is the treatment indicator,  $\mathbf{X}_i$  is a vector of control variables, and  $\varepsilon_i$  is the error term. The control variables include the baseline control variable and prefecture fixed effects. We use a randomized experiment to estimate the causal effect  $\beta$ . As specified in the PAP, we use robust standard errors in the main analyses and conduct robustness checks using the Wild bootstrap and randomization inference.

## 5 Empirical Results

### 5.1 Perceptions of intolerance norms

Panel (a) in Figure 3 shows the actual distribution of respondents' prior beliefs about other voters' corruption intolerance. The average value—our definition of intolerance norms—is 67%. The distribution is wide and markedly skewed, with many respondents perceiving other voters as less tolerant of corruption.

Panel (b) displays the cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) for three groups: swing voters (defined as those who do not support any particular party), opposition-party sup-

porters, and LDP supporters. The CDFs for swing voters and opposition-party supporters first-order stochastically dominate that of LDP supporters, indicating that, at every level of prior belief, a greater share of swing voters and opposition supporters believe that a larger proportion of others are intolerant of corruption, relative to LDP supporters.

Overall, although some LDP supporters hold stringent views about the scandal, such views are more commonly found among swing voters and opposition-party supporters, whereas LDP supporters tend to hold more lenient views. We later exploit this important variation in prior beliefs across political alignment to examine heterogeneous treatment effects.

## 5.2 Effects of the information treatment

### 5.2.1 Effects on voting outcomes

Figure 4 summarizes the effects of the information treatment on voting outcomes. Our main analyses focus on voting outcomes reported in the post-election survey. Table A.6 in the Online Appendix reports regression results based on these outcomes as well as on the pre-election intention measures.

The results indicate that the treatment increased voter turnout by 6.4 percentage points (left panel). This effect appears to be driven by a 7.3-percentage-point increase in the likelihood of voting for a challenger (right panel). By contrast, we find no evidence that the treatment affected the likelihood of voting for the incumbent candidate (middle panel). Taken together, these results suggest that providing information about actual intolerance norms mobilized voters and increased support toward the challenger.

These findings connect to a broader literature on voter information campaigns. [Banerjee et al. \(2011\)](#) show that providing information on candidate performance and qualifications increased turnout in India. [Arias et al. \(2022\)](#) document a non-monotonic effect of malfeasance revelations on turnout in Mexico, with turnout increasing at both low and high levels of malfeasance. By contrast, [Chong et al. \(2015\)](#) find that exposing corruption reduced both turnout and challenger support. Unlike [Chong et al. \(2015\)](#), our results indicate that information about intolerance norms not only mobilized voters but also increased challenger support.

Importantly, voter responses varied by political alignment. In Table A.7 in the Online

Appendix, we find that swing voters were mobilized and became more likely to vote for a challenger. In contrast, while the treatment did not affect turnout among LDP supporters, it significantly increased their support for the incumbent. Finally, we find no significant effects among supporters of opposition parties. The results for swing voters and LDP supporters are summarized in Figure 5.

Our preferred interpretations of these results are as follows. First, recall that swing voters tend to hold stringent views on corruption, whereas LDP supporters tend to hold lenient views, as shown in Figure 3. Upon learning that others are *more* tolerant of corruption, swing voters may have felt a stronger motivation to support the challenger, leading to increased turnout and a higher likelihood of casting a challenger ballot. In contrast, LDP supporters appear less responsive to the information treatment. Nonetheless, when informed that others are *less* tolerant of corruption, they became more likely to vote for the incumbent.

To assess the plausibility of these interpretations, we further divide our sample by their prior beliefs—specifically, whether they hold lenient or stringent views on political scandal. As shown in Table A.8 in the Online Appendix, the results are consistent with our preferred interpretations. We find that it was primarily stringent swing voters who were mobilized and chose to vote for a challenger. In contrast, lenient LDP supporters were more likely to support the incumbent and were also significantly less likely to vote for a challenger. This pattern effectively offsets any net effect on turnout among LDP supporters (see Table A.8 in the Online Appendix).<sup>7</sup>

### 5.2.2 Robustness checks

We conduct a series of robustness checks as pre-specified in the PAP, with results reported in the Online Appendix. Table A.15 reports  $p$ -values using randomization inference, considering multiple hypothesis testing (Young, 2019), and applying the Wild bootstrap (e.g., Cameron et al., 2008). Table A.16 presents Lee bounds (Lee, 2009) that account for attrition. Table A.17 shows estimation results that include additional controls (gender and

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<sup>7</sup> Table A.9 in the Online Appendix summarizes the results discussed above. In summary, swing voters tend to hold stringent prior beliefs—expecting that others are intolerant of the corruption scandal—whereas LDP supporters tend to hold more lenient views. Upon learning that others are less tolerant (for swing voters) or more tolerant (for LDP supporters), they become more likely to vote for a challenger or the incumbent, respectively. However, the overall effects are stronger among swing voters.

marital status) which were statistically significant in the attrition check. Finally, Table A.18 presents estimates using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood (Correia et al., 2020). Overall, the qualitative results are similar across these exercises.

### 5.2.3 Effects across district types

Recall that our sample includes both constituencies where the incumbent was implicated in corruption and those where no wrongdoing was detected. A central question is whether the information treatment increases turnout and challenger support across all districts, or only in those directly tainted by corruption. Put differently, we ask whether voters punish incumbents solely when they are personally implicated, or whether they also punish candidates from the ruling LDP more broadly, irrespective of direct involvement. Table 1 addresses this question.

According to Panel A in Table 1, the treatment significantly increases voter turnout in *clean districts* (Column (4)), an effect driven largely by swing voters (Column (5)). By contrast, the estimates for fraud districts are small and statistically insignificant (Column (1)). Decomposing the sample helps explain why. Recall that turnout requires voting for either the incumbent or a challenger. As shown in Column (1) of Panel B, treated voters—especially swing voters—*do* punish tainted incumbents. This incumbent penalty offsets the positive increase in challenger support documented in Panel C, yielding only muted effects on turnout (Panel A). In clean districts, by contrast, no such incumbent penalty arises, so the increase in challenger support translates directly into higher turnout. Interestingly, challenger support rises in both district types, suggesting a spillover effect of the treatment: even when the incumbent is not implicated, swing voters become more likely to back challengers, which produces a strong turnout effect in clean districts.

In addition, we observe a different pattern among LDP loyalists. Treated loyalists increase their support for the incumbent, especially in clean districts. They are also somewhat less likely to support challengers, though this effect is statistically insignificant.



## 6 Mechanism

To further understand the empirical patterns documented above, we outline a simple voting model that extends canonical frameworks of electoral accountability (Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986; Persson and Tabellini, 2000; Besley, 2006). A complete formalization and all proofs are relegated to the Online Appendix. In what follows, the terms “loyalists” and “LDP supporters” are used interchangeably.

### 6.1 Model setup

**Setting.** A unit mass of voters chooses whether to vote (incurring a fixed cost  $c > 0$ ) and, if so, whether to support a scandal-tainted incumbent  $I$  or a (clean) challenger  $C$ .

Voter  $i$ ’s ex-post utility is

$$U_i(x, t_i) = u_i(x) - ct_i,$$

where  $t_i \in \{0, 1\}$  is an indicator for turning out and

$$u_i(x) = \begin{cases} -\theta_i + \eta_i\phi, & x = I, \\ 0, & x = C, \end{cases}$$

where  $\theta_i > 0$  is the moral cost of re-electing the corrupt incumbent;  $\eta_i \in \{0, 1\}$  is a party-loyalty indicator ( $\eta_i = 1$  for loyalists, 0 for swing voters); and  $\phi > 0$  is the additional utility a loyalist enjoys when the incumbent remains in office. Normalizing  $u_i(C)$  to zero is without loss of generality.

Thus, the net utility gain from electing the challenger rather than the incumbent is

$$\Delta_i := u_i(C) - u_i(I) = \theta_i - \eta_i\phi.$$

Therefore, each voter  $i$  balances two forces: a *moral cost*  $\theta_i$  from re-electing a corrupt politician and a *loyalty attachment*  $\eta_i\phi$  from keeping the loyalists’ preferred party in office. The latter term is zero for swing voters.

**Signal and voting behavior.** Voters form prior beliefs  $\hat{p}_i$  about the unknown challenger vote share  $P$ . Before the election, voters receive a public signal stating that a large share of the electorate finds the slush-fund scandal unacceptable (e.g., “67% consider the scandal unacceptable”). This signal shifts their beliefs about the challenger’s vote share.

Let  $p \in (0,1)$  be the voter’s expected challenger vote share. Let  $\rho(p)$  denote the probability that a single ballot is pivotal in a large electorate when the expected challenger share is  $p$ . Under the standard Poisson (or asymptotic normal) approximation,  $\rho(p)$  is continuous, symmetric around  $p = 1/2$ , and single-peaked with its maximum at  $p = 1/2$ .

Given the net utility  $|\Delta_i|$ , the expected benefit of turning out is

$$B_i(p) := \rho(p) |\Delta_i|,$$

and voter  $i$  turns out whenever  $B_i(p) > c$ .

Consequently, voting behavior is summarized by the following rules.

- **Turnout rule**

$$t_i = \mathbb{1}\{B_i(p) > c\}.$$

The voter turns out if and only if the expected benefit evaluated at the posterior vote-share belief  $p$  strictly exceeds the fixed cost  $c$ ; if  $B_i(p) = c$  she abstains.

- **Ballot rule** (given turnout)

$$x_i = \begin{cases} C & \text{if } \Delta_i \geq 0, \\ I & \text{if } \Delta_i < 0. \end{cases}$$

Conditional on turning out, the voter selects the option that yields higher utility; An indifferent voter ( $\Delta_i = 0$ ) casts a challenger ballot  $C$ .

**Timeline.** The timeline of the model is as follows:

1. Nature draws the latent challenger vote share  $P$ . Each voter  $i$  independently draws a triple  $(\theta_i, \eta_i, \hat{p}_i)$  from the common-knowledge joint distribution.
2. The public signal is disclosed.

3. The election takes place. Voters compare the expected benefit  $B_i(p) = \rho(p)|\Delta_i|$  with the fixed cost  $c$ . Those who turn out vote  $C$  if  $\Delta_i \geq 0$  and  $I$  otherwise. The incumbent stays in office if the vote share for  $I$  is at least one-half; otherwise, the challenger wins. Finally, payoffs are realized.

This game admits at least one pure-strategy Bayesian-Nash equilibrium; the formal statement and proof appear in the Online Appendix.

The next section presents the model’s key comparative-statics results.

## 6.2 Comparative statistics

The public signal updates voters’ expected payoffs through several mechanisms. We examine the four most plausible channels below: *mean update*, *variance shrink*, *moral reinforcement*, and *identity reinforcement*. Throughout, a superscript 0 denotes a quantity under the baseline (pre-signal) information set, whereas a superscript 1 denotes its counterpart after the signal is received.

**Mean update.** The first channel is the *mean-update* channel; that is, the signal moves mean beliefs from a prior  $p^0$  to a posterior  $p^1$  such that  $|p^1 - 0.5| < |p^0 - 0.5|$ . After receiving the signal, voters therefore believe that the election is more competitive than they initially thought. This update can occur from either above or below. For voters with a low prior—those who initially believe that the challenger’s vote share is low—the update comes from below, raising their estimate of the challenger’s support (and thus the perceived competitiveness of the race). As noted in Section 5, loyalists tend to hold lenient views on corruption, suggesting that they are more likely to form such low priors.

Conversely, for voters with a high prior—those who initially believe that the challenger’s vote share is high—the update comes from above, lowering their estimate of the challenger’s support. Because swing voters tend to hold stringent views on corruption (see Section 5), they are more likely to start with such high priors.

In both cases, the shift in beliefs increases perceptions of pivotality and, therefore, the incentive to turn out. Since we observe higher turnout among swing voters, a mean-update mechanism implies that the information treatment should also increase their perceived piv-

otality.

To test this implication, we use responses to the post-treatment survey question, “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) as the outcome variable.<sup>8</sup> However, the data do not validate this channel: as shown in Figure 6 (and Table A.11 in the Online Appendix), the estimated treatment effect on perceived pivotality is positive but not statistically significant for the full sample or for swing voters. By contrast, we find a significant positive effect among loyalists—despite no corresponding increase in their turnout. Table A.12 in the Online Appendix indicates that this effect among loyalists is driven by respondents with lenient views. We return to this point later. Finally, we also examined the same mechanism using an alternative proxy as a robustness check, and obtained consistent results (see Section A.3 for details).

In sum, the evidence provides little support for the mean-update channel.

**Variance shrink.** Thus far, we find that the mean-update channel is unlikely to be the primary mechanism. A natural next step is to consider whether the treatment instead reduced the perceived *variance* of the vote-share distribution while keeping its mean fixed—a mechanism we label the *variance-shrink* channel. In the Online Appendix, we extend the model to allow for non-degenerate beliefs with variance. The extension shows that, when the variance of beliefs about the challenger’s vote share is reduced, while the perceived mean vote share is unchanged, the expected pivotality rises. The downstream implication mirrors that of the mean-update channel: this raises the expected benefit, inducing voters who clear the cost threshold to turn out.

Testing this mechanism would ideally require an individual measure of *perceived accuracy* (or *precision*) in one’s own beliefs, which our data lack. We therefore investigate whether the treatment reduces the variance of perceived pivotality *across* respondents in the treatment group relative to the control group. We note that this analysis is exploratory and was not pre-registered in the PAP.

We find evidence consistent with this channel. Among swing voters with stringent priors—the subgroup for which we observe a strong turnout effect—we apply the Brown-

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<sup>8</sup> According to Table A.10 in the Online Appendix, this measure strongly predicts actual turnout.

Forsythe test to the residuals from a regression of perceived pivotality on baseline controls and prefecture fixed effects. The median-based statistic is  $W_{50} = 4.82$  ( $p = 0.028$ ), indicating that the treatment group exhibits a significantly lower residual variance ( $s = 0.725$ ) than the control group ( $s = 0.798$ ).<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, we find no significant difference in residual dispersion between treated and control groups among lenient loyalists ( $W_{50} = 1.35$ ,  $p = 0.25$ ).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, while the treatment leaves the perceived mean vote share unchanged, it reduces its dispersion. The resulting rise in expected pivotality can prompt additional voters—especially swing voters—to turn out, suggesting that a variance-shrink channel, rather than a mean-update channel, explains the observed turnout increase.

**Moral reinforcement.** Although the variance-shrink channel is plausible and finds some support in the data, the same turnout pattern can also arise from a *moral-reinforcement* channel, which connects to the literature on the role of morals in voting (e.g., [Enke, 2020](#); [Walter and Redlawsk, 2019](#)). Under this alternative mechanism, the signal increases each voter’s moral cost of re-electing a corrupt incumbent:

$$\theta_i^0 \longrightarrow \theta_i^1 > \theta_i^0 \quad (\text{moral reinforcement}).$$

We model this as a common multiplicative shift,  $\theta_i^1 = g \theta_i^0$  with  $g > 1$ .

Moral reinforcement predicts higher turnout, because a larger moral cost scales up voters’ expected benefit, even though, like the variance-shrink channel, it leaves perceived pivotality unchanged.

Our survey data cannot test this channel directly, but we proxy an individual’s moral cost with her support for measures that increase transparency in political funding. Specifically, we look at (i) stated support for pro-transparency policies and (ii) the intention to donate to NGOs that promote transparency. For (i), we use responses to the post-treatment survey question, “To what extent do you support policies that aim to make the flow of political funds more transparent, including legal reforms?” (1 = Do not support at all, 2 = Do not

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<sup>9</sup> Test statistics are computed with Stata’s `robvar` command. The statistic without controls yields  $W_{50} = 5.11$  ( $p = 0.024$ ). Using the alternative pivotality measure discussed in Section A.3 in the Online Appendix produces a similar result ( $W_{50} = 7.09$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ).

<sup>10</sup> Using the alternative pivotality measure yields  $W_{50} = 0.88$ ,  $p = 0.35$ .

support much, 3 = Somewhat support, 4 = Strongly support). For (ii), we use responses to the question, “Suppose you have 50,000 yen at your disposal. How much of it would you donate to an NGO working to increase the transparency of political funding?” (I would like to donate ( ) yen out of 50,000 yen).

Table 2 provides evidence consistent with this channel. Among swing voters, the information treatment raises support for pro-transparency policies, whereas no significant change appears for party loyalists. By contrast, the treatment effect on intended donations is statistically insignificant for both groups.

**Loyalty reinforcement.** Finally, among lenient loyalists, we observe a non-trivial fraction switching their ballot from the challenger to the incumbent, while the information treatment *does not* increase turnout. Since none of the previously discussed mechanisms can account for this pattern, we introduce an *identity-reinforcement* channel, relating to studies that emphasize partisan loyalty as a key reason for the weak electoral punishment of corrupt politicians (e.g., [Anduiza et al., 2013](#); [Solaz et al., 2019](#)).

According to this mechanism, loyalists ( $\eta_i = 1$ ) receive an additional payoff  $\phi$  from supporting their party. The signal reinforces this identity:

$$\phi^0 \longrightarrow \phi^1 > \phi^0 \quad (\text{identity reinforcement}).$$

Because of this change, for always voters ( $B_i^0(p), B_i^1(p) \geq c$ ), turnout is unaffected. The treatment merely raises the identity payoff  $\phi$  enough to flip  $\Delta_i = \theta_i - \phi$  and hence the ballot from  $C$  to  $I$ .

In contrast to previous studies, our framework explicitly incorporates this *reinforcement* of party loyalty, which can trigger defensive behavior. In the empirical analysis below, we proxy individual party loyalty using respondents’ perceptions of the incumbent’s competence and trustworthiness. These survey questions are similar in format to the one used to construct the intervention screen, asking how many out of 100 people give particular responses. Unlike the earlier question, however, the competence item asks about the share who answer “Competent” or “Very competent,” and the trustworthiness item asks about the share who answer “Trustworthy” or “Very trustworthy.”

The results in Table 3 align with this mechanism: while the treatment has no effect on swing voters’ perceptions of competence or trustworthiness, we find strong positive effects on both outcomes among LDP supporters, especially those with initially lenient views.

Changing the identity parameter  $\phi$  should leave the pivotal probability  $\rho(p)$  unchanged. Yet we observe higher reported pivotality among lenient loyalists. A possible interpretation is that respondents implicitly value pivotality as

$$\text{reported pivotality} \propto \rho(p) \times |\Delta_i|.$$

Under identity reinforcement, an increase in  $\phi$  reduces  $\Delta_i$ ; for loyalists near the margin, this can flip their choice from challenger to incumbent, increasing the distance from indifference. As a result,  $|\Delta_i|$ —and thus perceived pivotality—rises, even though  $\rho(p)$  itself is unchanged. By contrast, for swing voters ( $\eta_i = 0$ ), the gap  $|\Delta_i|$  is unaffected, so no analogous rise is expected.

Taken together, the evidence points to two distinct mechanisms: for swing voters the treatment most plausibly worked through *variance shrink* and *moral reinforcement*, whereas for loyalists it operated primarily via *identity reinforcement*.

## 7 Discussion

### 7.1 Effect size

A seminal field experiment by [Gerber and Green \(2000\)](#) delivered messages stressing civic duty, electoral closeness, and neighborhood solidarity through door-to-door canvassing, direct mail, and commercial phone calls. The largest effect—8.7 percentage points—came from personal canvassing. Subsequent work confirms that face-to-face contact is typically the most effective mobilization tactic ([Green et al., 2013](#); [Gerber and Green, 2019](#)). Even without personal contact, however, [Gerber et al. \(2008\)](#) achieved a similar impact using mailers that leveraged social pressure—threatening to “publicize” who does and does not vote—which

increased participation by 8.1 percentage points.<sup>11</sup>

Our design involved neither personal canvassing nor social pressure, yet still produced a sizable effect: six percentage points.<sup>12</sup> A plausible explanation lies in the nature of our experimental setting. By design, the treatment provides voters with precise information about others' tolerance of corruption. For stringent swing voters, the message revealed that many fellow citizens were surprisingly lenient toward the scandal. This discrepancy appears to have sharpened their own moral aversion to re-electing a corrupt incumbent and motivated them to turn out. Because no social sanctions were at stake, the increase in turnout is more plausibly driven by personal moral considerations than by fear of external punishment.

## 7.2 Alternative explanations

The main findings of the paper are that informing voters about intolerance norms increases turnout and support for challengers, especially among swing voters, while it increases support for incumbents among ruling party loyalists. Although we find evidence consistent with mechanisms such as moral reinforcement and identity reinforcement, other explanations are possible.

First, we consider issue salience. [Boas et al. \(2019\)](#) argue that one possible reason for the lack of punishment in their information treatment is the greater salience of other policy concerns. Our treatment might have made the corruption issue more salient compared to other policy issues. In our setting, however, the scandal was already a major issue in the election, with high media coverage beforehand. Given this existing salience, it is unlikely that our treatment had an additional salience effect. Moreover, this mechanism *per se* does not explain the heterogeneous results between swing voters and ruling party loyalists.

To test this, we examine whether treatment effects differ based on whether respondents listed the slush fund issue as one of the three most important issues in the October election during the baseline survey. Columns (1) and (2) in Table A.14 in the Online Appendix show significant effects among *both* those who did not consider the slush fund issue important and

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<sup>11</sup> Other studies, such as [Funk \(2010\)](#) and [Dellavigna et al. \(2016\)](#), also show that social concerns affect voter turnout.

<sup>12</sup> This is a relatively large effect, even when compared to the two percentage point increase in turnout found by [Banerjee et al. \(2011\)](#), who provided voters with report cards detailing the incumbent's performance and candidate qualifications.



those who did. Moreover, the estimate is slightly larger for those who *already* considered the issue important. Thus, the salience channel is unlikely to be an alternative explanation.

Second, we consider perceptions of corruption prevalence. Previous studies suggest that (perceptions of) the prevalence of corruption affect whether voters punish corruption (Klašnja and Tucker, 2013; Vera, 2020; Arias et al., 2022). Since our treatment concerns others’ tolerance of corruption while holding information about the scandal itself constant, it should not affect voters’ perceptions about the prevalence of corruption.

We test this by splitting the sample based on respondents’ baseline perceptions of the percentage of politicians involved in the slush fund, using the median as a cutoff. Columns (3) and (4) in Table A.14 show no systematic differences between those who perceive high versus low corruption prevalence.

In sum, these alternative explanations do not account for our main findings.

## 8 Conclusion

This study revisits a fundamental question of democratic accountability: Do voters punish corrupt incumbents, even when strategic considerations are at play?

Using a pre-registered online survey experiment conducted during Japan’s 2023–2024 political funding scandal, we examine how strategic considerations about others, in particular, perceptions of intolerance norms against corruption, affect voting behavior. By providing information about the intolerance norms against the scandal, we find that it increased turnout and support for challengers. In contrast, we find that the same treatment increased support for incumbents among ruling party loyalists.

These findings underscore the importance of considering not only voters’ individual preferences, but also their beliefs about others. Perceptions of prevailing norms shape how individuals interpret political information and respond to it—especially when strategic considerations are involved.

To explain these patterns, we develop a simple model of electoral accountability incorporating strategic considerations about others. In addition to the mechanisms related to perceived pivotality, the model includes two key mechanisms: *moral reinforcement*, in which norm information raises the moral cost of supporting a corrupt incumbent; and *identity*

*reinforcement*, in which the same information threatens partisan identity and triggers defensive alignment. The observed heterogeneity in treatment effects is consistent with these mechanisms.

Overall, our results suggest that the accountability mechanisms emphasized in workhorse models can operate through norm-based mobilization—particularly via swing voters—but their effectiveness depends on the social and partisan context in which information is received. By highlighting how perceptions of prevailing norms shape voter behavior in the presence of strategic considerations, this study contributes to understanding how democratic institutions can remain resilient in the face of political misconduct.

As with any experimental study, these findings should be interpreted with care. The external validity of the effects may depend on features of the political context, the salience of the scandal, and the nature of the norm signal. Future research could explore whether similar mechanisms operate in other democratic settings, particularly in environments characterized by high polarization or institutional distrust.

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## Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Timeline of the Experiment

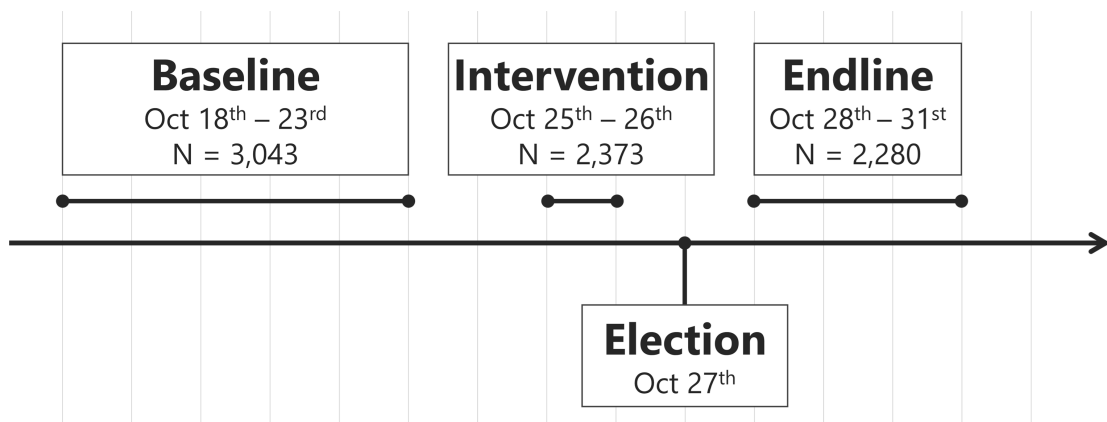


Figure 2: Information Treatment Screen

This survey project brings together a diverse group of participants, whose responses can be said to represent the views and attitudes of the average voter in Japan. In the previous survey, participants were asked how many of the other respondents considered that "omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds" are "completely unacceptable" or "somewhat unacceptable."

As a result, it was found that people believe that out of 100 participants, 67 considered "omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds" to be either "completely unacceptable" or "somewhat unacceptable."

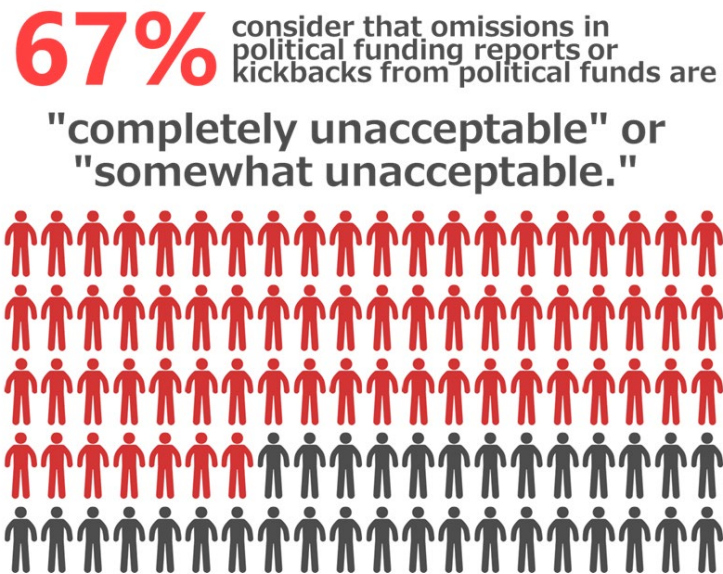
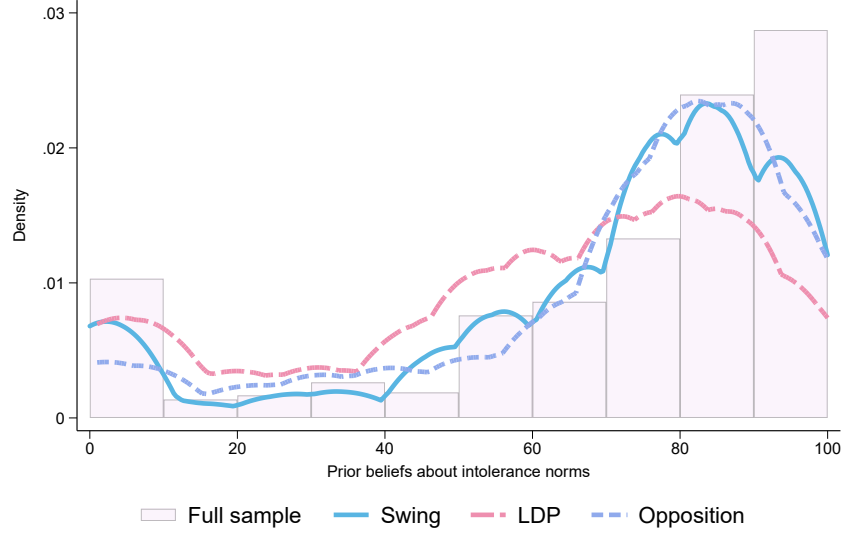
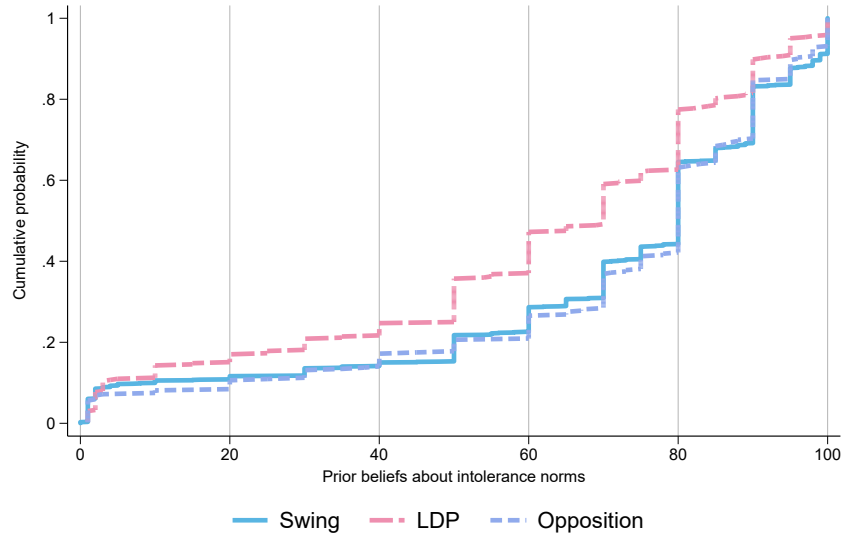


Figure 3: Distribution of Prior Beliefs about Intolerance Norms



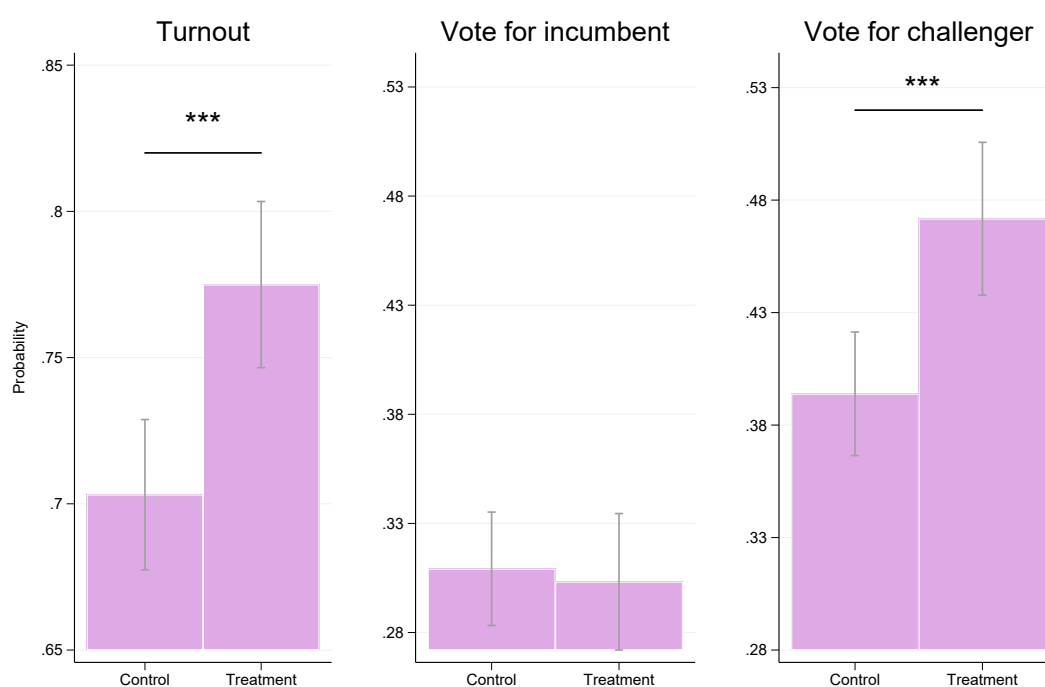
(a) Kernel density



(b) Cumulative distribution

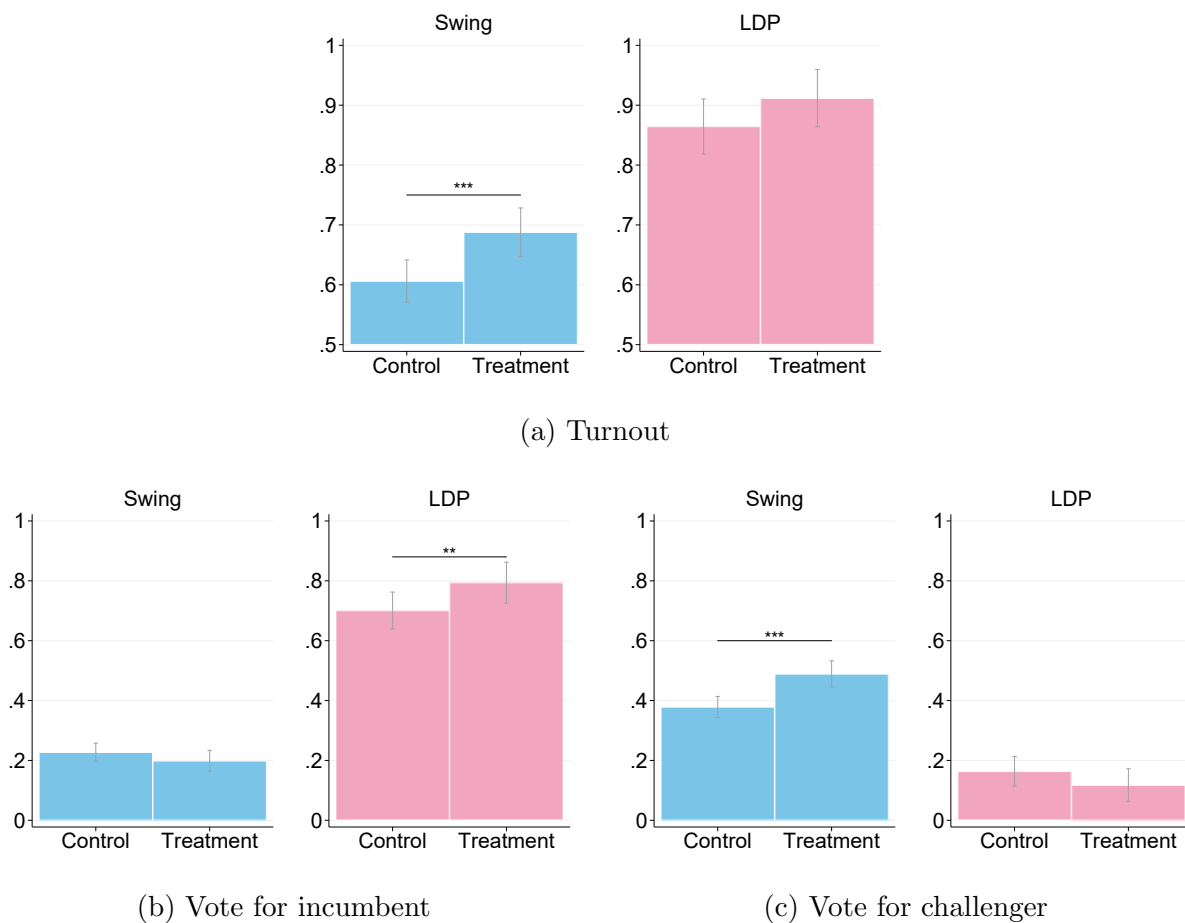
*Note:* The figures show the distributions of prior beliefs about intolerance norms. Panel (a) presents the kernel density estimates for swing voters, defined as those who do not support any particular party, LDP supporters, and opposition-party supporters. The background histogram reflects the full sample distribution. Panel (b) displays the cumulative distribution function for each group.

Figure 4: Main Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes



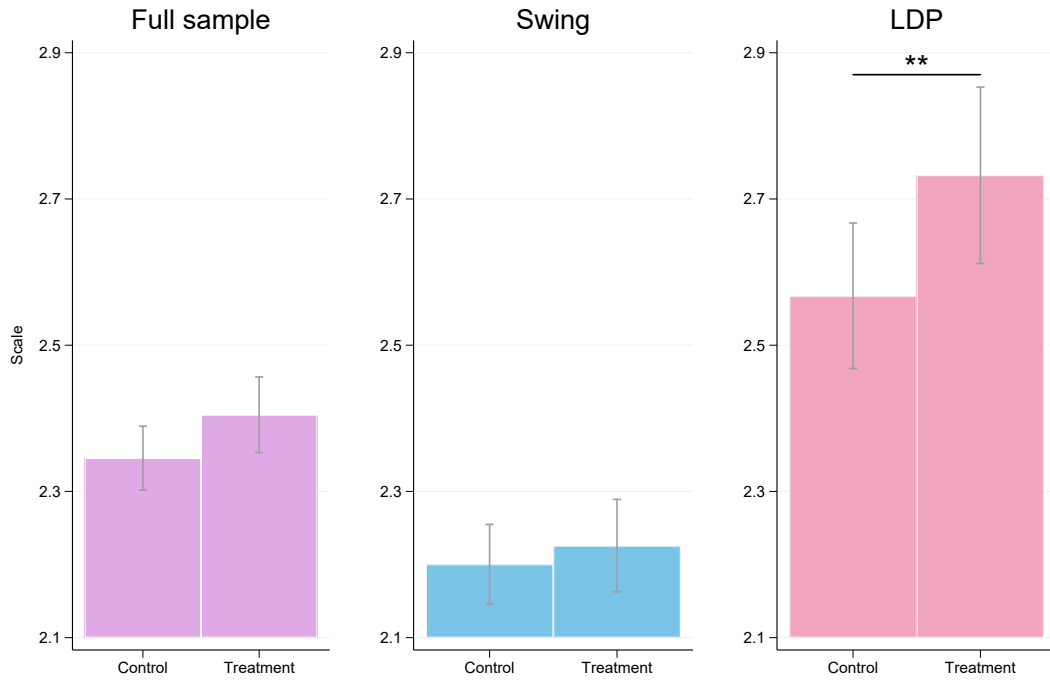
*Note:* Each bar represents the group average with a 95% confidence interval. The leftmost bars use a turnout dummy as the outcome; the middle bars use a dummy equal to one if the respondent voted for the incumbent; and the rightmost bars use a dummy equal to one if the respondent voted for a challenger. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Figure 5: Heterogeneous Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes (Swing Voters and LDP Supporters)



*Note:* Each bar represents the group average with a 95% confidence interval. Panel (a) uses a turnout dummy as the outcome; Panel (b) uses a dummy equal to one if the respondent voted for the incumbent; and Panel (c) uses a dummy equal to one if the respondent voted for a challenger. In each panel, the left two bars represent swing voters, and the right two bars represent LDP supporters. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Figure 6: Effects on Posterior Beliefs about Pivotality



*Note:* Each bar represents the group average with a 95% confidence interval. The outcome is posterior beliefs about pivotality, measured by responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. The leftmost bars represent the full sample, the middle bars represent swing voters, and the rightmost bars represent LDP supporters. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table 1: Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes, by District Type

Sample:	Fraud district			Clean district		
		Swing	LDP		Swing	LDP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A</i>						
	Dependent variable: Turnout					
Treatment	0.029 (0.028)	0.020 (0.039)	0.007 (0.053)	0.099 (0.027)***	0.128 (0.038)***	0.067 (0.046)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.735	0.667	0.857	0.670	0.545	0.872
Control std.	(0.442)	(0.472)	(0.352)	(0.471)	(0.499)	(0.336)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.03
N	994	597	163	1053	640	187
<i>Panel B</i>						
	Dependent variable: Vote for incumbent					
Treatment	−0.058 (0.028)**	−0.100 (0.031)***	0.059 (0.070)	0.031 (0.030)	0.031 (0.035)	0.128 (0.062)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.288	0.220	0.686	0.332	0.236	0.716
Control std.	(0.453)	(0.414)	(0.466)	(0.471)	(0.425)	(0.453)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.03	0.12	0.02	0.03	0.08
N	994	597	163	1053	640	187
<i>Panel C</i>						
	Dependent variable: Vote for challenger					
Treatment	0.086 (0.032)***	0.120 (0.041)***	−0.052 (0.057)	0.068 (0.030)**	0.097 (0.038)**	−0.061 (0.047)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.447	0.447	0.171	0.338	0.310	0.156
Control std.	(0.498)	(0.498)	(0.379)	(0.474)	(0.463)	(0.364)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.03	0.05	0.09
N	994	597	163	1053	640	187

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Panel B, whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Panel C, whether the respondent voted for a challenger. All columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Columns (1)-(3) include individuals in fraud constituencies, while Columns (4)-(6) include individuals in clean constituencies. Columns labeled “Swing” comprise respondents who do not support a particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” comprise LDP supporters. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.



Table 2: Effects of the Information Treatment on Support for Transparency in Political Funding

Sample:	Swing			LDP		
	All	Stringent	Lenient	All	Stringent	Lenient
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A</i>						
	Dependent variable: Policy support					
Treatment	0.156 (0.054)***	0.113 (0.065)*	0.207 (0.098)**	0.079 (0.079)	0.174 (0.114)	-0.077 (0.109)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	2.725	2.837	2.500	2.865	2.933	2.803
Control std.	(0.999)	(1.005)	(0.952)	(0.724)	(0.737)	(0.710)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.12
N	1392	965	427	364	187	177
<i>Panel B</i>						
	Dependent variable: Donation					
Treatment	-312.400 (347.594)	6.791 (394.088)	-1122.188 (720.598)	-153.346 (927.424)	-811.189 (1582.643)	333.010 (1126.759)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	2248.588	1947.600	2857.105	3260.302	3281.143	3241.598
Control std.	(7462.502)	(6712.429)	(8767.616)	(7482.803)	(8471.179)	(6506.688)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.09
N	1392	965	427	364	187	177

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is support for greater transparency in political funding, measured in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey by responses to the question: “To what extent do you support policies that aim to make the flow of political funds more transparent, including legal reforms?” (1 = Do not support at all, 2 = Do not support much, 3 = Somewhat support, 4 = Strongly support). In Panel B, the dependent variable is the amount (in Japanese yen) the respondent would donate to an NGO that promotes transparency in political funding, measured in the same survey by the question: “Suppose you have 50,000 yen at your disposal. How much of it would you donate to an NGO working to increase the transparency of political funding?” Columns labeled “Swing” comprise respondents who do not support a particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” comprise LDP supporters. Columns labeled “Stringent” contain respondents whose prior beliefs about intolerance norms are above the sample mean, whereas columns labeled “Lenient” contain respondents whose prior beliefs are at or below the mean. Columns labeled “All” pool these sub-samples. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table 3: Effects of the Information Treatment on Perceptions of the Incumbent’s Valence (Competence and Trustworthiness)

Sample:	Swing			LDP		
	All	Stringent	Lenient	All	Stringent	Lenient
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<hr/>						
<i>Panel A</i>	Dependent variable: Competence					
Treatment	1.424 (1.132)	1.543 (1.345)	0.807 (2.126)	6.007 (2.632)**	1.801 (3.576)	10.456 (3.849)***
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	30.722	31.425	29.301	34.604	36.971	32.479
Control std.	(21.458)	(21.480)	(21.382)	(23.907)	(22.167)	(25.273)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.10
N	1392	965	427	364	187	177
<hr/>						
<i>Panel B</i>	Dependent variable: Trustworthiness					
Treatment	1.649 (1.104)	1.818 (1.306)	1.239 (2.089)	6.592 (2.557)**	3.349 (3.540)	9.576 (3.654)***
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	29.681	29.991	29.054	34.955	36.219	33.821
Control std.	(21.261)	(21.343)	(21.120)	(23.975)	(22.638)	(25.158)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.08
N	1392	965	427	364	187	177

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Panel A uses respondents’ beliefs about the incumbent’s competence as the dependent variable. Specifically, each respondent estimates the share of other voters who view the incumbent as “very competent” or “competent” in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey; higher values indicate a belief that more people consider the incumbent competent. Panel B uses an analogous measure of perceived trustworthiness. Respondents estimate the share of voters who regard the incumbent as “very trustworthy” or “trustworthy” in the same survey; higher values indicate a belief that more people consider the incumbent trustworthy. Columns labeled “Swing” comprise respondents who do not support a particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” comprise LDP supporters. Columns labeled “Stringent” contain respondents whose prior beliefs about intolerance norms are above the sample mean, whereas columns labeled “Lenient” contain respondents whose prior beliefs are at or below the mean. Columns labeled “All” pool these sub-samples. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

# Online Appendix for *Misperceived Social Norms and Political Accountability: Evidence and Theory*

Shuheï Kitamura\*      Ryo Takahashi<sup>†</sup>      Katsunori Yamada<sup>‡</sup>

**Abstract:** This supplementary material includes additional text, tables, figures, and the survey questionnaire. For references to the tables and figures, please refer to the main text.

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## A.1 Sampling

The target constituencies consist of two types, both of whose incumbent candidates are from the LDP: fraud districts, where the incumbent politicians were involved in the slush fund issue, and clean districts, where the incumbent politicians were not implicated.

We selected target constituencies to enable clean comparisons by minimizing the influence of confounding factors. The initial pool comprised 43 LDP incumbents in the House of Representatives, excluding eight individuals who did not run for re-election due to suspension of civil rights, retirement, or health reasons.<sup>1</sup>

First, we excluded candidates who won through the proportional representation (PR) system (8) and focused on those who had won in single-member districts (SDs) in the previous election.<sup>2</sup> Second, we excluded candidates connected to another scandal involving the former Unification Church (16).<sup>3</sup> Third, we excluded those who would not be officially endorsed by the party in the election due to the fraud scandal (4) to avoid capturing this additional shock in our estimates. These exclusions left 15 candidates.

Each of these 15 LDP candidates represents a single SD constituency and is running for re-election.<sup>4</sup> We further restricted the sample to constituencies that (a) do not include any municipality split across multiple constituencies (3 excluded), and (b) were not significantly affected by the 2022 amendment to the Public Offices Election Law (1 excluded).

In prefectures where at least one fraud district exists, we selected clean districts with incumbent LDP candidates who were not involved in the slush fund scandal and that met the same criteria. We also excluded one fraud district located in a prefecture where no qualifying clean districts exist.

The final sample comprises 10 fraud districts and 15 clean districts. As shown in Figure A.1, these constituencies are geographically dispersed rather than clustered in a single

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<sup>1</sup> This also excludes three individuals who ran for office but were not incumbent candidates in the House of Representatives: Younosuke Kano, Tamayo Marukawa, and Yasuhide Nakayama.

<sup>2</sup> Some PR election winners actually *lost* in their SD contests, making comparisons difficult. PR candidates also represent large multi-prefecture constituencies, which differ substantially from the local constituencies considered here. Furthermore, PR outcomes depend on the party’s list rather than local constituents’ preferences.

<sup>3</sup> This scandal attracted significant public attention in the 2020s, particularly after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in July 2022. The LDP has been accused of maintaining close ties with the Unification Church.

<sup>4</sup> Japan does not impose term limits for political office.

region: Iwate (fraud: 1; clean: 1), Tochigi (1,1), Saitama (1,4), Chiba (1,2), Tokyo (1,3), Ishikawa (1,1), Nagano (1,1), Aichi (2,2), and Mie Prefectures (1,1), where the first and second numbers in parentheses indicate the number of fraud and clean districts, respectively.

Table A.2 compares these constituencies with others, showing that they are similar to each other and also to non-targeted constituencies, whether or not the incumbents were implicated in the slush fund issue.

The target population for the study consists of 2,800 registered voters aged between their 20s and 60s in these target constituencies. We determined this target number based on the power calculations described in the Pre-Analysis Plan (PAP).

## A.2 Theoretical Framework

We analyze an economy in which two candidates compete in a simple-majority election.

### A.2.1 Agents

**Voters.** A unit mass of voters is indexed by  $i \in [0, 1]$ . For each voter  $i$ , the pair  $(\theta_i, \eta_i)$  is drawn independently from a common-knowledge distribution  $F_{\theta, \eta}$  with support  $\Theta = [0, 1] \times \{0, 1\}$ . The parameter  $\theta_i \in [0, 1]$  represents voter  $i$ 's moral cost of re-electing a corrupt incumbent, while  $\eta_i \in \{0, 1\}$  is an indicator of partisan loyalty:

$$\eta_i = 1 \text{ (loyalist, L)}, \quad \eta_i = 0 \text{ (swing voter, S)}.$$

Loyalists constitute a share  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$  of the electorate.

**Politicians.** There are two candidates: the incumbent ( $I$ ) and the challenger ( $C$ ). We assume that the incumbent is corrupt, which is assumed to be common knowledge. The challenger is the clean opposition candidate who automatically wins the seat if the incumbent does not.

Finally, let  $w \in \{I, C\}$  denote the realized election winner, where  $w = I$  ( $w = C$ ) indicates an incumbent (challenger) victory.

### A.2.2 Information structure

Let  $P \in [0, 1]$  be the unobserved vote share the challenger would receive if the incumbent's corruption were common knowledge. Each voter  $i$  begins the game with a subjective distribution of  $P$  summarized by its first moment

$$\hat{p}_i := \mathbb{E}_i[P] \in (0, 1).$$

For expositional clarity, we start with the degenerate case  $P \sim \delta_{\hat{p}_i}$  (all mass at  $\hat{p}_i$ ); Section A.2.8.2 relaxes this to allow positive variance.

Nature then evaluates  $P$  against a publicly known norm threshold  $\bar{p} \in (0, 1)$  and broadcasts

$$s = \begin{cases} H & \text{if } P \geq \bar{p}, \\ L & \text{if } P < \bar{p}. \end{cases}$$

Although the model allows for two signal realizations, in our experiment, only the high-norm message is relevant. For expositional clarity, we present the analysis for the high-norm signal  $s = H$ . Where helpful, we use  $s = \emptyset$  to refer to the pre-signal (baseline) case.

*Remark.* The treatment message “67% consider the scandal unacceptable” is not a literal vote share. Let  $\bar{Q}$  denote this average belief and assume a monotone map  $m: [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$  such that the eventual challenger vote share is  $P = m(\bar{Q})$ . We calibrate the norm threshold  $\bar{p}$  so that  $m(0.67) \geq \bar{p}$ . Because  $m$  is monotone, any realization  $\bar{Q} \geq 0.67$  then implies  $P \geq \bar{p}$ , and Nature sends the high-norm signal  $s = H$ . All comparative-static results below continue to hold under this interpretation.

### A.2.3 Payoffs

First, the voter decides whether to incur the fixed cost  $c > 0$  of voting and turn out. Let  $t_i \in \{0, 1\}$  be the turnout indicator:  $t_i = 1$  means she pays the cost and appears at the polls;  $t_i = 0$  means she abstains and pays nothing.

Next, conditional on  $t_i = 1$  the voter chooses a ballot  $x_i \in \{I, C\}$ :  $x_i = I$  is a vote for the incumbent,  $x_i = C$  is a vote for the challenger.

For each voter  $i$ , the ex-post utility is

$$U_i = -ct_i + \mathbb{1}\{w = I\} [\eta_i \phi - \theta_i], \quad c > 0, \phi > 0,$$

where  $\mathbb{1}\{w = I\}$  is an indicator that equals 1 if and only if the incumbent wins; otherwise, 0. The payoff of the challenger outcome is normalized to zero, so differences arise only when  $w = I$ . The parameter  $\phi$  indexes the additional benefit loyalists receive from their party winning.

The first term captures the opportunity cost of voting. The bracketed term is evaluated when the incumbent remains in office: loyalists gain  $\phi$  but all voters suffer the corruption disutility  $\theta_i$ .

#### A.2.4 Pivotality

Let

$$\rho : [0, 1] \rightarrow (0, 1)$$

denote the probability that a single ballot is decisive when the expected challenger vote share is  $p$ .

We assume:

**A1** *Continuity*:  $\rho$  is continuous on  $[0, 1]$ .

**A2** *Single-peak*:  $\rho$  attains a unique maximum at  $p^* \in (0, 1)$  and is strictly decreasing in  $|p - p^*|$ .

**A3** *Interior symmetry in large electorates*: For a large electorate, the peak is at a tied race,  $p^* = 0.5$ .

*Example.* The Poisson approximation for an electorate of size  $n > 0$  satisfies Assumptions A1-A3:

$$\rho_{\text{Pois}}(p) = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{\pi n}} \exp[-2n(p - \frac{1}{2})^2].$$

For an electorate with  $n = 300,000$  voters, the peak probability is

$$\rho_{\text{Pois}}(0.5) = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2}{\pi(300,000)}} \approx 7.28 \times 10^{-4}.$$

### A.2.5 Best-response rules

Voters decide in two steps: (i) whether to incur the cost of voting and turn out and (ii) which candidate to support if they turn out. Define

$$\Delta_i := \theta_i - \eta_i \phi, \quad B_i(p) := \rho(p) |\Delta_i|,$$

where

- $\Delta_i$  is the net expressive evaluation of re-electing the incumbent.
  - $\Delta_i > 0$  (moral cost dominates partisan loyalty)  $\Rightarrow x_i = C$  if the voter turns out;
  - $\Delta_i < 0$  (partisan loyalty dominates moral cost)  $\Rightarrow x_i = I$  if the voter turns out.

The absolute value  $|\Delta_i|$  indicates how strongly the voter cares which candidate wins.

- $B_i(p)$  converts that preference into expected benefit by scaling  $|\Delta_i|$  with pivotality  $\rho(p)$ .

Then:

- **Turnout rule**

$$t_i = \mathbb{1}\{B_i(p) > c\}.$$

The voter turns out if and only if the expected benefit evaluated at the posterior vote-share belief  $p$  strictly exceeds the fixed cost  $c$ ; if  $B_i(p) = c$  she abstains.

- **Ballot rule** (given turnout)

$$x_i = \begin{cases} C & \text{if } \Delta_i \geq 0, \\ I & \text{if } \Delta_i < 0. \end{cases}$$

Conditional on turning out, the voter selects the option that yields higher utility; An indifferent voter ( $\Delta_i = 0$ ) casts a challenger ballot  $C$ .



Since swing voters have no partisan attachment ( $\eta_i = 0$ ), the inequality  $\Delta_i \geq 0$  is more likely to hold for them; hence, conditional on turning out, they are more likely to vote for the challenger. By contrast, partisan loyalists satisfy  $\eta_i > 0$ ; this positive loyalty term lowers  $\Delta_i$ , and, consequently, an incumbent vote more probable when they cast a ballot.

### A.2.6 Timeline

The timeline is as follows:

0. Nature draws the latent challenger vote share  $P \in [0, 1]$ . Each voter  $i$  independently draws a triple  $(\theta_i, \eta_i, \hat{p}_i)$  from the common-knowledge joint distribution

$$F_{\theta, \eta, p} = F_{\theta, \eta} \times G_p,$$

where  $\theta_i \in [0, 1]$  is the idiosyncratic moral cost,  $\eta_i \in \{0, 1\}$  is party loyalty, and  $\hat{p}_i \in [0, 1]$  is the voter's heterogeneous prior mean for  $P$ .

1. The public signal  $s = H$  is disclosed.
2. The election takes place. Each voter decides whether to turn out  $t_i \in \{0, 1\}$ . Voters with  $t_i = 1$  cast a ballot  $x_i \in \{I, C\}$ . The incumbent stays in office if the vote share for  $I$  is at least one-half; otherwise, the challenger wins. Finally, payoffs are realized.

### A.2.7 Equilibrium

Denote by  $p \in [0, 1]$  the common conjectured share of challenger votes that every voter takes as given when forming expectations. A *pure Bayesian-Nash equilibrium* is a measurable profile  $(t_i, x_i)_{i \in [0, 1]}$  satisfying

- (a) **Best response.** For every voter  $i$  the pair  $(t_i, x_i)$  maximizes her expected payoff when the challenger share is believed to be  $p$ .
- (b) **Consistency.** When all voters follow the profile  $(t_i, x_i)$ , the realized challenger share

$$F(p) = \int_0^1 t_i \mathbf{1}\{x_i = C\} di$$

equals the conjectured share:  $F(p) = p$ .

Condition (a) captures optimal individual behavior; condition (b) ensures that aggregate behavior justifies the belief that guided those individual decisions. In addition, with a continuum of i.i.d. voters, the law of large numbers makes the realized challenger share deterministic:  $P = F(p) = p$  almost surely.

**A0** *Atomless types*. The distribution of net preferences has no point masses:

$$\Pr\{\Delta_i = z\} = 0 \quad \text{for every } z \in \mathbb{R}.$$

**Theorem 1** (Existence). *Under Assumptions A0 and A1 for any voting cost  $c > 0$  together with the expressive parameters  $\{\theta_i, \eta_i, \phi\}_{i \in [0,1]}$ , the voting game admits at least one pure-strategy Bayesian-Nash equilibrium in turnout and ballot choices.*

*Proof. Step 1 (best-response thresholds).* Given  $p$  the expected benefit is  $B_i(p) = \rho(p)|\Delta_i|$  with  $\Delta_i = \theta_i - \eta_i\phi$ .

$$t_i(p) = \mathbb{1}\{|\Delta_i| > c/\rho(p)\}, \quad x_i(p) = C \text{ if } \Delta_i \geq 0, x_i(p) = I \text{ otherwise}$$

Because  $\rho(\cdot)$  is continuous and strictly positive,  $T(p) := c/\rho(p)$  is continuous and finite. Hence turnout is a threshold rule in  $|\Delta_i|$ ; ballot choice depends only on the sign of  $\Delta_i$ .

*Step 2 (the aggregate challenger share).* Let  $F_\Delta$  be the distribution of  $\Delta_i$  on  $\mathbb{R}$ . The fraction of voters who both turn out and choose  $C$  is

$$C(p) = \int_{T(p)}^{\infty} dF_\Delta(z),$$

while the fraction who turn out and choose  $I$  is  $I(p) = \int_{-\infty}^{-T(p)} dF_\Delta(z)$ . Hence, the realized challenger share is

$$F(p) := \frac{C(p)}{C(p) + I(p)}.$$

*Step 3 (continuity of  $F$ ).* Because  $T(p)$  is continuous and  $F_\Delta$  has no atoms by Assumption A0,

the map  $p \mapsto C(p)$  is continuous; the same holds for  $I(p)$ . The ratio  $F(p)$  is therefore a continuous function on the compact interval  $[0, 1]$ .

*Step 4 (fixed point).* Since  $F : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$  is continuous, Brouwer's fixed-point theorem guarantees at least one  $p^*$  such that  $F(p^*) = p^*$ . The associated measurable best-response profile  $(t_i(p^*), x_i(p^*))_{i \in [0, 1]}$  is a Bayesian Nash equilibrium.  $\square$

## A.2.8 Comparative statics

Throughout what follows, we attach a superscript 0 to any quantity that refers to the baseline (pre-signal) information set and a superscript 1 to its counterpart after the high-norm message is received. Define the change in the expected benefit for voter  $i$  as

$$\Delta B_i := B_i(p^1) - B_i(p^0) = [\rho(p^1) - \rho(p^0)] |\Delta_i|.$$

**Proposition 1** (Turnout).

- (i) If  $\Delta B_i > 0$ , turnout weakly increases and increases strictly when  $B_i(p^0) \leq c < B_i(p^1)$ .
- (ii) If  $\Delta B_i < 0$ , turnout weakly decreases and decreases strictly when  $B_i(p^1) \leq c < B_i(p^0)$ .

*Proof.* The proof is immediate from the turnout rule  $t_i = \mathbb{1}\{B_i > c\}$ : raising (lowering) the expected benefit cannot lower (raise) the indicator, and it flips  $t_i$  exactly when the inequality crosses the threshold  $c$ .  $\square$

### A.2.8.1 Mean update

To keep notation light, we assume two common priors,  $\hat{p}_T$  for  $T \in \{L, S\}$ , such that

$$\hat{p}_L < \frac{1}{2} < \hat{p}_S.$$

Thus loyalists hold a more *lenient* prior (they expect a smaller challenger share), whereas swing voters hold a more *stringent* prior. All results below continue to hold with fully heterogeneous priors; the two-point specification is adopted solely for brevity.

Suppose the signal shifts the expected challenger share  $p$  toward the halfway mark (0.5). Because  $\rho(p)$  attains its maximum at a tied race, moving  $p$  closer to 0.5 makes the election appear more competitive and therefore raises the pivotality probability  $\rho(p)$ .

Formally,

**Corollary 1** (Turnout under a mean update). *If  $|p^1 - 0.5| < |p^0 - 0.5|$ , then  $\Delta B_i \geq 0$  for every voter and  $\Delta B_i > 0$  for all  $i$  with  $|\Delta_i| > 0$ . Consequently, turnout weakly increases, and it increases strictly when  $B_i(p^0) \leq c < B_i(p^1)$ .*

*Proof.* Because  $\rho(\cdot)$  is single-peaked with its maximum at 0.5, moving  $p$  closer to 0.5 strictly raises pivotality:  $\rho(p^1) > \rho(p^0)$ . Hence  $\Delta B_i = [\rho(p^1) - \rho(p^0)] |\Delta_i| \geq 0$ , with a strict inequality whenever  $|\Delta_i| > 0$ . Part (i) of Proposition 1 then yields the claimed turnout part.  $\square$

Moreover, additional voters mobilized by the message tend to back the challenger if they are swing voters and the incumbent if they are loyalists.

Corollary 1 permits the following first-moment reading:

- **Swing voters.** Before the message, they expected a large challenger share, say  $p^0 \approx 0.7$ . The high-norm message revised that expectation downward toward a fifty-fifty race,  $p^1 \approx 0.5$ . Moving toward the pivotality peak at 0.5 increases  $\rho(p)$ , so their expected benefit crosses the cost  $c$  and turnout rises for some swing voters.
- **Loyalists.** They started on the opposite side of the peak ( $p^0 \approx 0.3$ ), believing the incumbent comfortably ahead. The same message nudged their expectation upward,  $p^1 \approx 0.5$ , making the incumbent appear less certain to win. Again, the belief moves closer to the peak, raising  $\rho(p)$  and inducing some loyalists to turn out.

In the data, the information treatment raises turnout among swing voters, so, if this channel is operative, we should also observe higher reported pivotality for swing voters.

However, survey responses show only small changes in reported pivotality for them, casting doubt on a pure mean-update story. To reconcile this, we next introduce a *variance-shrink* channel: if the message *shrinks* the perceived variance of the vote-share distribution while keeping its mean fixed, Jensen's inequality implies that the expected pivotality that drives turnout increases even though the headline probability  $\rho(\cdot)$  barely moves. This variance-shrink mechanism is developed in the following subsection.

### A.2.8.2 Variance shrink

For brevity, we assume that all voters share the same prior  $\hat{p}$ ; all results extend to fully heterogeneous priors. Suppose that, conditional on each public signal  $s$ ,

$$P \mid s = \mu_s + \sigma_s Z, \quad \mathbb{E}[Z] = 0, \mathbb{E}[Z^2] = 1,$$

where  $\mu_s$  is the conditional mean of the challenger vote share,  $\sigma_s > 0$  its conditional standard deviation (variance  $\sigma_s^2$ ), and  $Z$  is a standardized shock, independent of  $s$ . We focus on the case in which the treatment leaves the mean fixed but reduces dispersion:

$$\mu_{s^1} = \mu_{s^0}, \quad \sigma_{s^1}^2 < \sigma_{s^0}^2, \tag{V}$$

where  $s^0$  denotes the information state before the message and  $s^1$  the state after the message is received.

The expected pivotality under signal  $s$  is

$$\mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s] = \int_0^1 \rho(p) dF_{P|s}(p),$$

where  $F_{P|s}$  is the conditional distribution of  $P$  given  $s$ .

We assume:

**A4** *Local strict concavity.* The pivotality function  $\rho : [0, 1] \rightarrow (0, 1)$  is *strictly concave* on an open interval  $(\hat{p} - \varepsilon, \hat{p} + \varepsilon)$  for some  $\varepsilon > 0$ .<sup>5</sup>

**Corollary 2** (Turnout under variance shrink). *Assume (V) and let  $\rho$  satisfy Assumption A4. Then*

$$\mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^1] > \mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^0], \quad \Delta B_i := |\Delta_i| \left( \mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^1] - \mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^0] \right) \geq 0.$$

Hence every voter with  $|\Delta_i| > 0$  whose cost satisfies

$$B_i(\hat{p}) \leq c < B_i(\hat{p}) + \Delta B_i$$

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<sup>5</sup> For the Poisson formula  $\rho_{\text{Pois}}$ , the assumption holds on the entire domain.

turns out strictly more often after the high-norm message  $s^1$ .

*Proof. Step 1 (Jensen).* For a concave function  $g$ ,  $\mathbb{E}[g(X)] \leq g(\mathbb{E}[X])$ , with strict inequality unless  $X$  is degenerate. Set  $g = \rho$  and  $X = P \mid s$ . Because  $\mathbb{E}[P \mid s] = \mu_s = \hat{p}$ ,

$$\rho(\hat{p}) - \mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s] =: G_s > 0 \quad \text{for } \sigma_s^2 > 0.$$

*Step 2 (compare two signals).* With identical means,

$$\mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^1] - \mathbb{E}[\rho(P) \mid s^0] = (\rho(\hat{p}) - G_{s^1}) - (\rho(\hat{p}) - G_{s^0}) = G_{s^0} - G_{s^1}.$$

Strict concavity implies the Jensen gap is *smaller* when the variance is smaller; condition (V) therefore gives  $G_{s^0} > G_{s^1}$  and the required inequality.

*Step 3 (expected benefit).* Define  $\Delta B_i := |\Delta_i|(\cdot)$ ; positivity follows from Step 2 for every voter with  $|\Delta_i| > 0$ .

*Step 4 (turnout).* Proposition 1(i) states that turnout rises strictly when the expected benefit crosses the cost. Hence voters with  $B_i(\hat{p}) \leq c < B_i(\hat{p}) + \Delta B_i$  turn out more often under  $s^1$ .  $\square$

Empirically, the treatment increased turnout among swing voters without shifting their reported pivotality. A possible interpretation, according to this channel, is that the message tightens the posterior distribution of the challenger's vote share, leaving its mean unchanged. This variance-shrink raises expected pivotality and mobilizes some voters.

### A.2.8.3 Moral reinforcement

Although the variance-shrink channel offers a plausible interpretation and the data provide some support, the same turnout pattern can also be explained by a *moral-reinforcement* mechanism. According to this mechanism, the high-norm message raises the moral cost of re-electing a corrupt incumbent while leaving the pivotality probability unchanged:

$$\theta_i^0 \longrightarrow \theta_i^1 > \theta_i^0 \quad (\text{moral reinforcement}).$$

In what follows, we formalize this mechanism by assuming a common multiplicative shift

$$\theta_i^1 = g \theta_i^0 \text{ with } g > 1.^6$$

**Corollary 3** (Turnout and ballots under moral reinforcement). *Let  $p$  be the common conjecture that enters the pivotality function  $\rho(p)$ . Assume the high-norm message scales the moral-cost parameter by  $g > 1$ :  $\theta_i^1 = g \theta_i^0$ .*

1. *Turnout.*

- *Swing voters ( $\eta_i = 0$ ). Since  $B_i^1(p) = g B_i^0(p)$ , turnout weakly rises and rises strictly whenever  $B_i^0(p) \leq c < B_i^1(p)$ .*
- *Loyalists ( $\eta_i = 1$ ).*
  - (i)  $\theta_i^0 \geq \phi$ . Here  $B_i^1(p) > B_i^0(p)$ ; turnout weakly increases and increases strictly when  $B_i^0(p) \leq c < B_i^1(p)$ .
  - (ii)  $\theta_i^0 < \phi$ . Define the cut-off  $\theta^* := \frac{2\phi}{g+1} \in (\phi/g, \phi)$ .
    - If  $\theta_i^0 < \theta^*$  then  $B_i^1(p) < B_i^0(p)$ ; turnout weakly decreases and decreases strictly when  $B_i^1(p) \leq c < B_i^0(p)$ .
    - If  $\theta_i^0 = \theta^*$  then  $B_i^1(p) = B_i^0(p)$ ; turnout is unchanged.
    - If  $\theta_i^0 > \theta^*$  then  $B_i^1(p) > B_i^0(p)$ ; turnout weakly increases and increases strictly when  $B_i^0(p) \leq c < B_i^1(p)$ .

2. *Ballot choice.*

- *Swing voters. She keeps  $\Delta_i > 0$  and therefore continues to vote for the challenger.*
- *Loyalists. A ballot switches from incumbent to challenger if and only if  $\theta_i^0 < \phi \leq g \theta_i^0$  (equivalently  $\phi/g \leq \theta_i^0 < \phi$ ); otherwise she continues to vote for the incumbent when  $\theta_i^0 < \phi/g$  and the challenger when  $\theta_i^0 \geq \phi$ .*

---

<sup>6</sup> For brevity, suppose  $F_{\theta, \eta} = F_{\theta} \times F_{\eta}$ ; that is, the moral-cost parameter  $\theta$  is independent of party loyalty  $\eta$ . Under this assumption the moral-reinforcement mechanism reduces to an unconditional first-order stochastic dominance shift in  $F_{\theta}$ :

$$\theta^1 = g \theta^0, \quad g > 1, \quad \implies \quad F_{\theta}^1(x) = F_{\theta}^0(x/g) \leq F_{\theta}^0(x).$$

*Proof.* 1. *Swing voters* ( $\eta_i = 0$ ). Here  $|\Delta_i^0| = \theta_i^0$  and  $|\Delta_i^1| = g\theta_i^0$ , so  $B_i^1(p) = gB_i^0(p) > B_i^0(p)$ . Proposition 1(i) yields the turnout part; the sign  $\Delta_i > 0$  is unchanged, so the voter continues to support the challenger.

2. *Loyalists* ( $\eta_i = 1$ ). Write  $\Delta_i^k = \theta_i^k - \phi$  for  $k = 0, 1$ .

1. *Case*  $\theta_i^0 \geq \phi$ . Both gaps are non-negative and  $|\Delta_i^1| - |\Delta_i^0| = (g - 1)\theta_i^0 > 0$ ; hence  $B_i^1(p) > B_i^0(p)$  and turnout weakly (strictly) rises on the stated cost interval. The voter continues to vote for the challenger.

2. *Case*  $\theta_i^0 < \phi$ . With  $\theta^* = 2\phi/(g + 1) \in (\phi/g, \phi)$ ,

$$|\Delta_i^1| - |\Delta_i^0| \begin{cases} < 0 & \theta_i^0 < \theta^*, \\ = 0 & \theta_i^0 = \theta^*, \\ > 0 & \theta_i^0 > \theta^*. \end{cases}$$

Multiplying by  $\rho(p)$  gives the three turnout sub-cases in the corollary. A ballot flip requires  $\Delta_i^0 < 0 \leq \Delta_i^1$ , i.e.  $\phi/g \leq \theta_i^0 < \phi$ ; otherwise the voter continues to vote for the incumbent ( $\theta_i^0 < \phi/g$ ).

□

Moral reinforcement implies (i) higher turnout, because the increase in moral cost scales up the expected benefit, and (ii) a challenger shift among loyalists whose updated moral cost now exceeds their party attachment ( $\phi/g \leq \theta_i^0 < \phi$ ). Like the variance-shrink channel, it leaves the pivotality probability flat while still raising turnout.

Empirically, we observe neither a systematic shift to the challenger nor a turnout change among loyalists, whereas swing voters behave exactly as the mechanism predicts—higher turnout with unchanged ballot choice. Hence, if moral reinforcement is at work, it appears to operate only for swing voters.

#### A.2.8.4 Identity reinforcement

Finally, for lenient loyalists, we observe a non-trivial fraction switch their ballot from the challenger to the incumbent, while the high-norm message *does not* raise turnout. As none



of the above mechanisms can produce these results, we introduce an *identity-reinforcement* mechanism in this subsection.

According to this mechanism, loyalists ( $\eta_i = 1$ ) receive an additional payoff  $\phi$  from supporting their party. The high-norm message reinforces this identity:

$$\phi^0 \longrightarrow \phi^1 > \phi^0 \quad (\text{identity reinforcement}).$$

**Corollary 4** (Ballot flip under identity reinforcement). *Let some loyalists satisfy*

$$\theta_i - \phi^0 > 0 > \theta_i - \phi^1, \quad B_i^0(p) \text{ and } B_i^1(p) \text{ both on the same side of } c.$$

*Then turnout is unchanged, but the ballot flips from the challenger to the incumbent.*

*Proof.* The identity boost reverses the sign of  $\Delta_i = \theta_i - \phi$ ; by the ballot rule a voter switches from  $C$  to  $I$ . Because  $B_i^k(p)$  stays on the same side of  $c$  for  $k = 0, 1$ , the turnout decision is unaffected.  $\square$

For always voters ( $B_i^0(p), B_i^1(p) \geq c$ ) turnout is unaffected; the treatment merely raises the identity payoff  $\phi$  enough to flip  $\Delta_i = \theta_i - \phi$  and hence the ballot from  $C$  to  $I$ . These are the *moderate* loyalists—strong enough partisans to be “won back” once identity becomes more salient, yet initially willing to punish corruption.

Changing  $\phi$  leaves the pivotality probability,  $\rho(p)$ , unchanged, so a pure identity shift cannot alter objective pivotality. However, we observe an increase in the reported pivotality among loyalists. A possible interpretation is that respondents evaluate the survey question about the pivotality as the product of (i) the pivotality probability and (ii) the expressive value of casting their preferred ballot. Formally,

$$\text{reported pivotality} \propto \rho(p) \times |\Delta_i|.$$

Identity reinforcement increases  $|\Delta_i|$  by raising  $\phi$ , while  $\rho(p)$  stays fixed. Hence, loyalists record higher “pivotality” even though the underlying probability component is unchanged; the entire increase reflects the heightened expressive benefit of voting for their party. In contrast, we expect no such effect for swing voters as  $|\Delta_i|$  stays constant.

### A.3 Alternative proxy for perceived pivotality

We also examine an alternative proxy for perceived pivotality: respondents’ expectations about the share of voters in their constituency who will support the incumbent. Although this variable is a more direct measure of the challenger’s expected vote share in the model—even though the question asks about the incumbent—its interpretation carries an important caveat. Because the item explicitly references the incumbent’s electoral performance, responses are susceptible to *identity reinforcement* described in the main text: loyalists may report higher incumbent support simply to affirm their partisan identity. In that case, any estimated treatment effect would blend belief updating with strengthened loyalty rather than capture pure changes in perceived pivotality.

Bearing this caveat in mind, Panel A of Table A.13 shows results mirroring our earlier pivotality measure: a strong treatment effect for loyalists. Yet the sign is positive: treated loyalists believe that more voters will back the incumbent than do their control-group counterparts—contrary to the model’s mean-update prediction. A plausible interpretation is that the treatment heightens partisan identity, making loyalists even more inclined toward their party. Panel B of the same table supports this view. Using respondents’ beliefs about the share of voters who *should* back the incumbent, we find a positive treatment effect among loyalists. This indicates that the intervention strengthens their normative support for the incumbent. Consequently, they form a wishful belief that more voters *will* vote for her.

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## A.4 Figures and Tables

Figure A.1: Target Constituencies

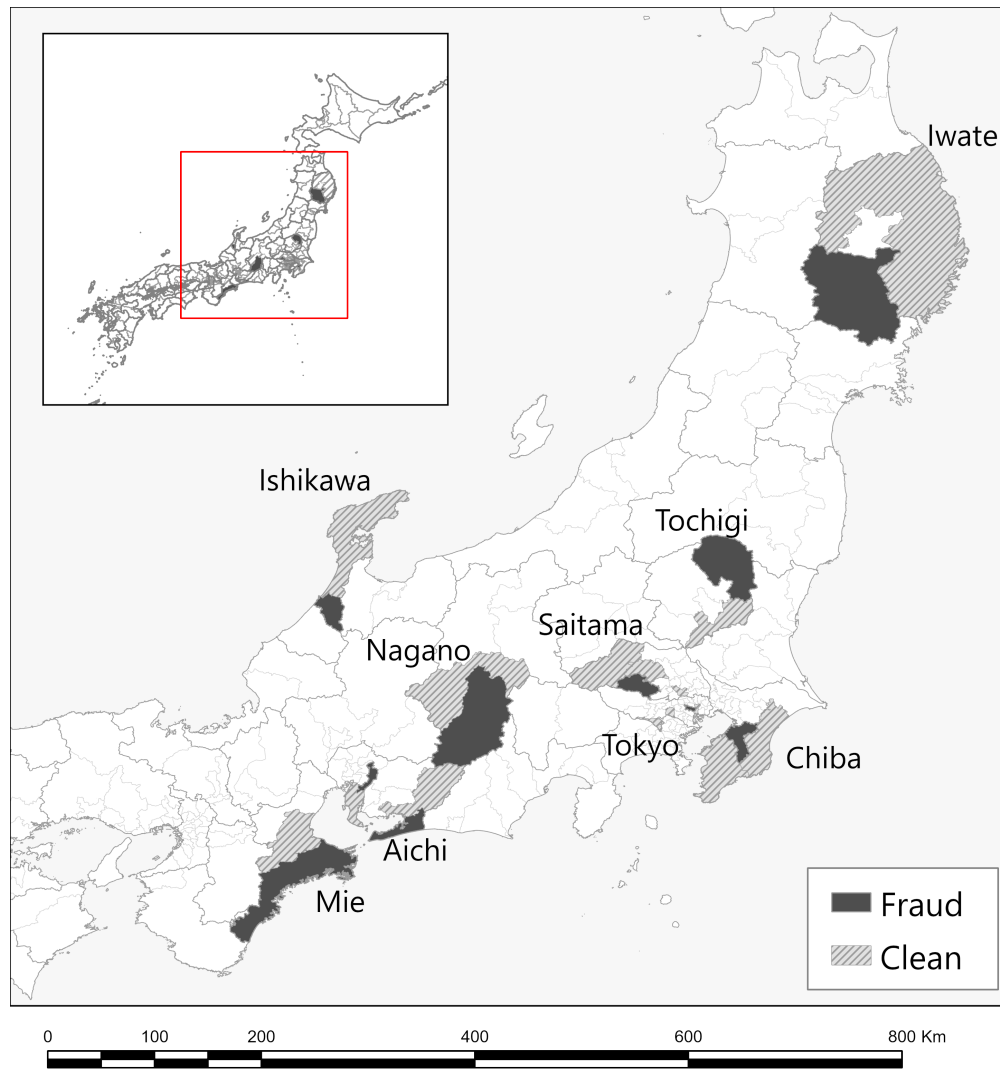


Table A.1: Post-treatment Variables

Variable	Definition	Incentivized?
<i>Panel A: Pre-election</i>		
Turnout (before election)	Intend to turn out = 1, abstain = 0	No
Vote for incumbent (before election)	Intend to vote for incumbent = 1, challenger = 0	No
Vote for challenger (before election)	Intend to vote for challenger = 1, incumbent = 0	No
Others will vote	Perceived share of other voters who <i>will</i> vote for incumbent	Yes
Others should vote	Perceived share of other voters who <i>should</i> vote for incumbent	Yes
Policy support	Intended support for transparency-enhancing policies (1 = Do not support at all ... 4 = Strongly support)	No
Donation	Intended amount of donation $\in [0, 50,000]$	No
Competence	Perceived share of other voters who view the incumbent as “very competent” or “competent”	Yes
Trustworthiness	Perceived share of other voters who view the incumbent as “very trustworthy” or “trustworthy”	Yes
<i>Panel B: Post-election</i>		
Turnout (after election)	Turned out = 1, abstained = 0	No
Vote for incumbent (after election)	Voted for incumbent = 1, challenger = 0	No
Vote for challenger (after election)	Voted for challenger = 1, incumbent = 0	No

Table A.2: Target and Non-target Constituencies

	(1) Fraud	(2) Clean	(3) Other fraud	(4) Other all
Turnout	0.534 (0.034)	0.528 (0.040)	0.533 (0.034)	0.522 (0.037)
Log(registered)	12.678 (0.162)	12.732 (0.185)	12.788 (0.154)	12.787 (0.169)
Female-male ratio	1.037 (0.046)	1.035 (0.037)	1.073 (0.053)	1.077 (0.065)
Vote share (LDP)	0.222 (0.051)	0.254 (0.050)	0.199 (0.045)	0.221 (0.065)
Vote share (DP)	0.202 (0.067)	0.228 (0.070)	0.235 (0.055)	0.209 (0.066)
N	11	15	39	263

*Note.* Standard errors are in parentheses. Constituencies without candidates from the relevant parties were excluded when calculating vote shares.

Table A.3: Balance Check

	(1) Control	(2) Treatment	(1) vs. (2)	N
Female	0.397 (0.013)	0.374 (0.016)	0.278	2280
20s	0.026 (0.004)	0.021 (0.005)	0.457	2280
30s	0.081 (0.007)	0.060 (0.008)	0.058	2280
40s	0.212 (0.011)	0.204 (0.013)	0.613	2280
50s	0.337 (0.013)	0.358 (0.016)	0.301	2280
60s	0.344 (0.013)	0.358 (0.016)	0.502	2280
Education years	14.044 (0.053)	14.318 (0.062)	0.001	2280
Married	0.576 (0.013)	0.595 (0.016)	0.366	2280
Log income	14.549 (0.019)	14.588 (0.023)	0.206	2280
N	1366	914		

*Note.* Standard errors are in parentheses. The third column shows  $p$ -values.

Table A.4: Attrition Check

	(1) Not attrited	(2) Attrited	(1) vs. (2)	N
Female	0.388 (0.010)	0.558 (0.051)	0.001	2375
20s	0.024 (0.003)	0.021 (0.015)	0.869	2375
30s	0.073 (0.005)	0.063 (0.025)	0.722	2375
40s	0.209 (0.009)	0.200 (0.041)	0.837	2375
50s	0.345 (0.010)	0.274 (0.046)	0.150	2375
60s	0.350 (0.010)	0.442 (0.051)	0.065	2375
Education years	14.154 (0.041)	14.242 (0.181)	0.662	2375
Married	0.584 (0.010)	0.695 (0.047)	0.031	2375
Log income	14.565 (0.015)	14.459 (0.067)	0.153	2375
N	2280	95		

*Note.* Standard errors are in parentheses. The third column shows  $p$ -values.



Table A.5: Summary Statistics

	Mean	Std	Min	p10	p50	p90	Max	N
<u>A. Outcomes</u>								
Turnout (before election)	0.60	0.49	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2280
Turnout (after election)	0.73	0.44	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2047
Vote for incumbent (before election)	0.23	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
Vote for incumbent (after election)	0.31	0.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2047
Vote for challenger (before election)	0.37	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
Vote for challenger (after election)	0.43	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2047
Perceived pivotality	2.37	0.81	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	2280
Others will vote	47.92	23.01	0.00	5.00	50.00	75.00	100.00	2280
Others should vote	45.07	25.33	0.00	2.50	50.00	80.00	100.00	2280
Policy support	2.84	0.97	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	2280
Donation	2790.38	7928.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	10000.00	50000.00	2280
Competence	32.15	21.75	0.00	3.00	30.00	60.00	100.00	2280
Trustworthiness	31.32	21.52	0.00	3.00	30.00	60.00	100.00	2280
<u>B. Treatment dummy</u>								
Treatment	0.40	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
<u>C. Covariates</u>								
Female	0.39	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
20s	0.02	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2280
30s	0.07	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2280
40s	0.21	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
50s	0.35	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
60s	0.35	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2280
Education	14.15	1.93	9.00	12.00	14.00	16.00	16.00	2280
Married	0.58	0.49	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2280
Log income	14.56	0.71	12.61	13.53	14.63	15.42	17.91	2280
<u>D. Party identity</u>								
Swing	0.64	0.48	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2175
LDP	0.17	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2175
Opposition	0.15	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2175

Table A.6: Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes

	Dependent variable:		
	Turnout	Vote for incumbent	Vote for challenger
	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Panel A: Post-election</i>			
Treatment	0.064 (0.019)***	−0.009 (0.021)	0.073 (0.022)***
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.703	0.309	0.394
Control std.	(0.457)	(0.462)	(0.489)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.00	0.02
N	2047	2047	2047
<i>Panel B: Pre-election</i>			
Treatment	0.100 (0.021)***	0.017 (0.018)	0.084 (0.021)***
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.552	0.219	0.333
Control std.	(0.497)	(0.414)	(0.471)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.01	0.03
N	2280	2280	2280

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variables are respondents' actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey; in Panel B, they are the stated vote intentions from the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Column (1) reports turnout, Column (2) reports a vote for the incumbent candidate, and Column (3) reports a vote for a challenger. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.7: Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes, by Political Alignment

Survey: Sample:	Post-election			Pre-election		
	Swing	LDP	Opposition	Swing	LDP	Opposition
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A</i> Dependent variable: Turnout						
Treatment	0.074 (0.027)***	0.044 (0.034)	−0.006 (0.028)	0.132 (0.027)***	0.049 (0.041)	0.010 (0.032)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.606	0.864	0.941	0.422	0.788	0.914
Control std.	(0.489)	(0.343)	(0.237)	(0.494)	(0.409)	(0.281)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.03
N	1237	350	309	1392	364	320
<i>Panel B</i> Dependent variable: Vote for incumbent						
Treatment	−0.031 (0.024)	0.103 (0.047)**	−0.018 (0.041)	0.007 (0.019)	0.093 (0.050)*	0.043 (0.040)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.228	0.701	0.172	0.127	0.626	0.126
Control std.	(0.420)	(0.459)	(0.378)	(0.333)	(0.485)	(0.332)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.06
N	1237	350	309	1392	364	320
<i>Panel C</i> Dependent variable: Vote for challenger						
Treatment	0.105 (0.028)***	−0.059 (0.037)	0.012 (0.047)	0.124 (0.026)***	−0.045 (0.037)	−0.033 (0.048)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.379	0.164	0.769	0.295	0.162	0.789
Control std.	(0.485)	(0.371)	(0.423)	(0.456)	(0.369)	(0.409)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.05
N	1237	350	309	1392	364	320

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is whether the respondent turned out (or intends to turn out) to vote; in Panel B, whether the respondent voted (or intends to vote) for the incumbent; and in Panel C, whether the respondent voted (or intends to vote) for a challenger. Columns (1)–(3) use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey, whereas Columns (4)–(6) use stated vote intentions from the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Columns labeled “Swing” include respondents who do not support a particular party, those labeled “LDP” include LDP supporters, and those labeled “Opposition” include supporters of opposition parties. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.8: Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes, by Political Alignment and Prior Beliefs about Intolerance Norms

Sample:	Swing		LDP	
	Stringent	Lenient	Stringent	Lenient
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A</i>				
	Dependent variable: Turnout			
Treatment	0.083 (0.032)***	0.054 (0.051)	0.051 (0.047)	0.023 (0.052)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.614	0.591	0.840	0.886
Control std.	(0.487)	(0.493)	(0.368)	(0.319)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.05
N	861	376	179	171
<i>Panel B</i>				
	Dependent variable: Vote for incumbent			
Treatment	-0.017 (0.028)	-0.054 (0.047)	0.099 (0.070)	0.123 (0.068)*
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.211	0.260	0.660	0.737
Control std.	(0.409)	(0.440)	(0.476)	(0.442)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.09
N	861	376	179	171
<i>Panel C</i>				
	Dependent variable: Vote for challenger			
Treatment	0.100 (0.034)***	0.108 (0.053)**	-0.048 (0.059)	-0.100 (0.049)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.402	0.331	0.180	0.149
Control std.	(0.491)	(0.471)	(0.386)	(0.358)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.10
N	861	376	179	171

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Panel B, whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Panel C, whether the respondent voted for a challenger. All columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Columns labeled “Swing” comprise respondents who do not support a particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” comprise LDP supporters. Columns labeled “Stringent” contain respondents whose prior beliefs about intolerance norms are above the sample mean, whereas columns labeled “Lenient” contain respondents whose prior beliefs are at or below the mean. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.9: Summary of Main Results

Sample:	Swing				LDP		
	Full sample	All	Stringent	Lenient	All	Stringent	Lenient
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Turnout	+	+	+	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)
Vote for incumbent	(−)	(−)	(−)	(−)	+	(+)	+
Vote for challenger	+	+	+	+	(−)	(−)	−

*Note:* Rows labeled “Turnout,” “Vote for incumbent,” and “Vote for challenger” report results for, respectively, (i) whether the respondent turned out to vote, (ii) whether the respondent voted for the incumbent, and (iii) whether the respondent voted for a challenger. Column (1) reports results for the full sample. Columns labeled “Swing” include respondents who do not support any particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” include LDP supporters. Columns labeled “Stringent” comprise respondents whose prior beliefs about intolerance norms exceed the sample mean; columns labeled “Lenient” comprise those at or below the mean. Columns labeled “All” pool these sub-samples. Plus and minus signs indicate the direction of the estimated coefficients. Signs shown in parentheses indicate estimates that are not statistically significant at conventional levels. Regression results are shown in Tables A.6, A.7, A.8, A.11, and A.12.

Table A.10: Correlation between Posterior Beliefs about Pivotality and Voter Turnout

	Dependent variable: Turnout	
	(1)	(2)
Perceived pivotality	0.206 (0.011)***	0.191 (0.011)***
Female		-0.087 (0.019)***
Age		0.041 (0.009)***
Education years		0.028 (0.005)***
Log income		0.014 (0.014)
Married		0.064 (0.019)***
Dep. var. mean	0.307	0.307
Dep. var. std.	(0.461)	(0.461)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.20
N	2047	2047

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable is whether the respondent turned out to vote, as reported in the post-election survey. The key independent variable (“Perceived pivotality”) captures posterior beliefs about pivotality and is measured by responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.11: Effects of the Information Treatment on Posterior Beliefs about Pivotality

Dependent variable: Sample:	Perceived pivotality		
	Full sample	Swing	LDP
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment	0.052 (0.035)	0.019 (0.043)	0.161 (0.082)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	2.346	2.200	2.568
Control std.	(0.824)	(0.805)	(0.757)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.06
N	2280	1392	364

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable captures posterior beliefs about pivotality and is measured by responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Column (1) uses the full sample. The column labeled “Swing” includes respondents who do not support a particular party, while the column labeled “LDP” includes LDP supporters. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.12: Effects of the Information Treatment on Posterior Beliefs about Pivotality, by Political Alignment and Prior Beliefs about Intolerance Norms

Dependent variable:	Perceived pivotality			
	Swing		LDP	
	Stringent	Lenient	Stringent	Lenient
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	0.028 (0.050)	−0.028 (0.085)	0.118 (0.116)	0.236 (0.118)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	2.222	2.156	2.505	2.624
Control std.	(0.809)	(0.796)	(0.748)	(0.763)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.09
N	965	427	187	177

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable captures posterior beliefs about pivotality and is measured by responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Columns labeled “Swing” comprise respondents who do not support a particular party, whereas columns labeled “LDP” comprise LDP supporters. Columns labeled “Stringent” contain respondents whose prior beliefs about intolerance norms are above the sample mean, whereas columns labeled “Lenient” contain respondents whose prior beliefs are at or below the mean. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.



Table A.13: Effects of the Information Treatment on Posterior Beliefs about Pivotality (Alternative Measures)

Sample:	Full sample	Swing	LDP
	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Panel A</i>	Dependent variable: Others will vote		
Treatment	2.933 (0.957)***	1.422 (1.191)	6.021 (2.375)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	46.679	46.430	50.833
Control std.	(24.225)	(23.717)	(23.454)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.03
N	2280	1392	364
<i>Panel B</i>	Dependent variable: Others should vote		
Treatment	3.150 (1.060)***	2.270 (1.312)*	5.857 (2.687)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	43.746	43.038	49.131
Control std.	(26.399)	(25.542)	(26.443)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.05
N	2280	1392	364

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is the respondent's belief about the proportion of other voters in the same constituency who will vote for the incumbent candidate. In Panel B, the dependent variable is the respondent's belief about the proportion of other voters in the same constituency who should vote for the incumbent candidate. Column (1) uses the full sample. The column labeled "Swing" includes respondents who do not support any particular party, while the column labeled "LDP" includes respondents who support the LDP. Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.14: Effects of the Information Treatment on Voting Outcomes: Alternative Mechanisms

Sample:	Importance		Prevalence	
	Important	Not important	Prevalent	Not prevalent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A</i>				
	Dependent variable: Turnout			
Treatment	0.087 (0.029)***	0.048 (0.025)*	0.068 (0.029)**	0.063 (0.026)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.782	0.667	0.662	0.742
Control std.	(0.414)	(0.472)	(0.474)	(0.438)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04
N	671	1376	983	1064
<i>Panel B</i>				
	Dependent variable: Vote for incumbent			
Treatment	-0.018 (0.032)	0.003 (0.027)	0.010 (0.029)	-0.022 (0.030)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.226	0.348	0.270	0.346
Control std.	(0.419)	(0.477)	(0.445)	(0.476)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
N	671	1376	983	1064
<i>Panel C</i>				
	Dependent variable: Vote for challenger			
Treatment	0.105 (0.038)***	0.045 (0.026)*	0.057 (0.032)*	0.085 (0.031)***
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.556	0.319	0.391	0.396
Control std.	(0.498)	(0.466)	(0.488)	(0.490)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03
N	671	1376	983	1064

*Note.* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. In Panel A, the dependent variable is whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Panel B, whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Panel C, whether the respondent voted for a challenger. All columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Column (1) includes individuals who consider the slush fund issue to be one of the most important issues in the October election (listing it among the three issues they consider most important), while Column (2) includes those who do not. Column (3) includes individuals who believe that the prevalence of politicians involved in the slush fund issue is high (above the median value), while Column (4) includes individuals who believe it is low (below or equal to the median value). Baseline controls include educational attainment. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.15: Robustness Check: Wild Bootstrap and Robust Inference

	Dependent variable:			
	Turnout	Vote for incumbent	Vote for challenger	Perceived pivotality
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	0.064 (0.023)**	−0.009 (0.021)	0.073 (0.017)***	0.052 (0.022)**
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.703	0.309	0.394	2.346
Control std.	(0.457)	(0.462)	(0.489)	(0.824)
Wild bootstrap (p-value)	0.003	0.682	0.001	0.019
Randomization inference (p-value)	0.002	0.683	0.001	0.143
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.01
N	2047	2047	2047	2280

*Note.* Standard errors, clustered at the prefecture level, are reported in parentheses. In Column (1), the dependent variable is an indicator for whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Column (2), whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Column (3), whether the respondent voted for a challenger. These columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Column (4) uses a measure of posterior beliefs about pivotality, based on responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Baseline controls include educational attainment. Wild bootstrap p-values are computed using the *boottest* package (Roodman et al., 2019) with 3000 replications and Webb weights. Randomized p-values are computed using the *randcmd* package (Young, 2019). \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.16: Robustness Check: Lee (2009) bounds

	Dependent variable:			
	Turnout	Vote for incumbent	Vote for challenger	Perceived pivotality
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A</i>	Selection indicator is <i>Married</i>			
Upper	0.135 (0.041)***	0.017 (0.032)	0.118 (0.036)***	0.113 (0.071)
Lower	0.084 (0.025)***	−0.034 (0.038)	0.067 (0.036)*	0.014 (0.071)
<i>Panel B</i>	Selection indicator is <i>Female</i>			
Upper	0.106 (0.042)**	0.010 (0.056)	0.144 (0.055)***	0.114 (0.110)
Lower	0.058 (0.052)	−0.038 (0.037)	0.096 (0.043)**	−0.068 (0.096)
N	2047	2047	2047	2280

*Note.* Standard errors are reported in parentheses. In Column (1), the dependent variable is an indicator for whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Column (2), whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Column (3), whether the respondent voted for a challenger. These columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Column (4) uses a measure of posterior beliefs about pivotality, based on responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Baseline controls include educational attainment. Upper and lower bounds are computed using the *leebounds* package (Tauchmann, 2014). \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.17: Robustness Check: Additional Controls

	Dependent variable:			
	Turnout	Vote for incumbent	Vote for challenger	Perceived pivotality
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	0.061 (0.019)***	−0.011 (0.021)	0.072 (0.022)***	0.050 (0.034)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Additional controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.703	0.309	0.394	2.346
Control std.	(0.457)	(0.462)	(0.489)	(0.824)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.02
N	2047	2047	2047	2280

*Note.* Standard errors are reported in parentheses. In Column (1), the dependent variable is an indicator for whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Column (2), whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Column (3), whether the respondent voted for a challenger. These columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Column (4) uses a measure of posterior beliefs about pivotality, based on responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Baseline controls include educational attainment; additional controls include indicators for gender (female) and marital status (married). \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

Table A.18: Robustness Check: Poisson pseudo-Maximum Likelihood

	Dependent variable:			
	Turnout	Vote for incumbent	Vote for challenger	Perceived pivotality
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	0.087 (0.026) <sup>***</sup>	−0.028 (0.068)	0.169 (0.051) <sup>***</sup>	0.022 (0.015)
Baseline controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prefecture F.E.	yes	yes	yes	yes
Control mean	0.703	0.309	0.394	2.346
Control std.	(0.457)	(0.462)	(0.489)	(0.824)
pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.006	0.002	0.009	0.001
N	2047	2047	2047	2280

*Note.* Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. In Column (1), the dependent variable is an indicator for whether the respondent turned out to vote; in Column (2), whether the respondent voted for the incumbent; and in Column (3), whether the respondent voted for a challenger. These columns use actual voting outcomes from the post-election survey. Column (4) uses a measure of posterior beliefs about pivotality, based on responses to the question: “How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?” (1 = Not at all, 2 = Not much, 3 = Some, 4 = A great deal) in the pre-election (post-treatment) survey. Baseline controls include educational attainment. All models are estimated using the *ppmlhdfc* package (Correia et al., 2020). \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate  $p < 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $p < 0.01$ , respectively.

## A.5 Survey Questionnaire

### A.5.1 English-translated Version

#### Screening & Baseline Survey - October 18th

As of July 14, 2024, please provide the postal code of your address listed on your certificate of residence.

※Please respond with a 7-digit number without a hyphen.

(       )

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In this House of Representatives election (national election), have you already voted during early voting?

- ☐ Voted during early voting
- ☐ Did not vote during early voting

In social surveys, it is important for respondents to fully understand the questions and provide their answers accordingly.

From the following options, please select "None of the above."

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ AI
- ☐ 42
- ☐ Globalization
- ☐ None of the above

Thank you for accessing this survey page. This survey is being conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Osaka University, the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University, and the Faculty of Economics at Kinki University to understand public perceptions regarding elections.

This survey aims to academically investigate your thoughts and opinions leading up to the House of Representatives election.

The information you provide will be used only for academic research and not for any other purposes. The survey is anonymous, and your privacy will be fully protected. It is designed to understand your honest perspectives, without any judgment of right or wrong. We request your understanding in this regard and hope you are comfortable while answering the following questions.

In addition to this survey, some participants will be invited to complete additional surveys at approximately 6:00 PM on Friday, October 25, and Monday, October 28. This survey consists of 11 questions, while the survey on Friday, October 25, includes 8 questions, each expected to take about 5 minutes to complete. The survey on Monday, October 28, is a simple one with only 2 questions, which are expected to take no more than 2 minutes to complete.

Please note that if you leave the survey, any answers provided before your leave will still be submitted to the research team.

Furthermore, questions marked with the following icon are bonus questions. For these questions, after collecting responses from all participants in this survey for each question, 100 participants who answered correctly will be randomly selected to receive an additional 100 yen worth of points. Across the three surveys, there are a total of 5 bonus questions, allowing participants to earn up to 500 yen in bonus points.





If you are able to participate, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing all the surveys.

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Q1. We would like to ask about your political values. Do you support any political party?

- ☐ I support the Liberal Democratic Party.
- ☐ I support another ruling party.
- ☐ I support an opposition party.
- ☐ I do not support any political party.
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Q2. Regarding the upcoming House of Representatives election (national election), please select up to three issues that you personally consider important, in order of priority.

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
	↓	↓	↓
Inflation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Declining birthrate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aging population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change and the environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fiscal policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nuclear power and energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
Constitutional amendment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issues related to the former Unification Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politics and money/slush funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional revitalization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disaster relief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is no second/third important issues		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3. Among the candidates in this House of Representatives election, which political party does the incumbent member of the House of Representatives in your constituency belong to?

- ☐ Liberal Democratic Party
- ☐ Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan
- ☐ Japan Innovation Party
- ☐ Komeito
- ☐ Democratic Party for the People
- ☐ Japanese Communist Party
- ☐ Reiwa Shinsengumi
- ☐ Social Democratic Party
- ☐ Other parties/Independent
- ☐ I don't know

Q4. In the previous House of Representatives election (2021), which party or independent candidate did you vote for?

- ☐ Did not vote
- ☐ Liberal Democratic Party
- ☐ Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan
- ☐ Japan Innovation Party
- ☐ Komeito
- ☐ Democratic Party for the People
- ☐ Japanese Communist Party
- ☐ Reiwa Shinsengumi
- ☐ Social Democratic Party
- ☐ Other parties/Independent
- ☐ Other/Prefer not to answer

Q5. How frequently have you been exposed to election-related news since October of this year?

- ☐ Almost every day
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Hardly at all

Q6. What percentage of Japanese politicians do you believe are involved in the issue of “omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds”?

(        )%

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Q7. This survey project brings together a diverse group of participants, whose responses can be said to represent the views and attitudes of the average voter in Japan.

Regarding the following question, how many out of 100 participants do you think answered "Completely unacceptable" or "Somewhat unacceptable"?

<Question>

To what extent can you tolerate the issue of “omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds”?

<Responses>

1. Completely unacceptable 2. Somewhat unacceptable 3. Somewhat acceptable 4. Completely acceptable

To the above question, I believe that (                      ) out of 100 people answered "1. Completely unacceptable" or "2. Somewhat unacceptable."

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Q8. What is your highest educational level?

- ☐ Junior high school graduate
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Junior college, technical college, or vocational school graduate
- ☐ University or graduate school graduate

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Q9. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Divorced/Widowed

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Q10. How many people live in your household?

- ☐ 1 person (living alone)
- ☐ 2 people
- ☐ 3 people
- ☐ 4 people
- ☐ 5 people
- ☐ 6 people
- ☐ 7 or more people

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Q11. What was your household's annual income before taxes in 2023?

- ☐ Less than 2 million yen
- ☐ 2 million to less than 4 million yen
- ☐ 4 million to less than 6 million yen
- ☐ 6 million to less than 8 million yen
- ☐ 8 million to less than 10 million yen
- ☐ 10 million to less than 12 million yen
- ☐ 12 million to less than 15 million yen
- ☐ 15 million to less than 20 million yen
- ☐ 20 million to less than 30 million yen
- ☐ 30 million to less than 50 million yen
- ☐ 50 million yen or more

## Intervention & Post-treatment survey - October 25th

Thank you for accessing this survey page. This survey is being conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Osaka University, the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University, and the Faculty of Economics at Kinki University to understand public perceptions regarding elections.

This survey aims to academically investigate your thoughts and opinions leading up to the House of Representatives election.

The information you provide will be used only for academic research and not for any other purposes. The survey is anonymous, and your privacy will be fully protected. It is designed to understand your honest perspectives, without any judgment of right or wrong. We request your understanding in this regard and hope you are comfortable while answering the following questions.

Please note that if you leave the survey, any answers provided before your leave will still be submitted to the research team.

Furthermore, questions marked with the following icon are bonus questions. For these questions, after collecting responses from all participants in this survey for each question, 100 participants who answered correctly will be randomly selected to receive an additional 100 yen worth of points. Across the three surveys, there are a total of 5 bonus questions, allowing participants to earn up to 500 yen in bonus points.



If you are able to participate, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing all the surveys.

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This survey project brings together a diverse group of participants, whose responses can be said to represent the views and attitudes of the average voter in Japan. In the previous survey, participants were asked how many of the other respondents considered that "omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds" are "completely unacceptable" or "somewhat unacceptable."

As a result, it was found that people believe that out of 100 participants, 67 considered "omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds" to be either "completely unacceptable" or "somewhat unacceptable."

**67%** consider that omissions in political funding reports or kickbacks from political funds are "completely unacceptable" or "somewhat unacceptable."

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This survey project brings together a diverse group of participants, whose responses can be said to represent the views and attitudes of the average voter in Japan.

Q1. We would like to ask your opinion.

Regarding the following question, how many people out of 100 in your constituency, whom we surveyed, do you think answered that they "will vote" for the incumbent candidate in your constituency?

<Question>

Will you vote for the incumbent candidate in your constituency in this election?

<Responses>

1. Will vote 2. Will not vote

To the above question, I believe that (                      ) out of 100 people answered "1. Will vote".





Q2. Similarly, we would like to ask your opinion.

Regarding the following question, how many people out of 100 in your constituency, whom we surveyed, do you think answered that they "should vote" for the incumbent candidate in your constituency?

<Question>

Do you think you "should vote" for the incumbent candidate in your constituency in this election?

<Answers>

1. Should vote 2. Should not vote

To the above question, I believe that (                      ) out of 100 people answered "1. Should vote."



Q3. Similarly, we would like to ask your opinion.

Regarding the following question, how many people out of 100 in your constituency, whom we surveyed, do you think answered that the incumbent House of Representatives member (elected in the previous 2021 election) in their constituency is "very competent" or "competent"?

<Question>

How competent do you think the incumbent House of Representatives member (elected in the previous 2021 election) in your constituency is?

<Answers>

1. Not competent at all 2. Not competent 3. Competent 4. Very competent

To the above question, I believe that ( ) out of 100 people answered "4. Very competent" or "3. Competent".



Q4. Similarly, we would like to ask your opinion.

Regarding the following question, how many people out of 100 in your constituency, whom we surveyed, do you think answered that the incumbent House of Representatives member (elected in the previous 2021 election) in their constituency is "very trustworthy" or "trustworthy"?

<Question>

How trustworthy do you think the incumbent House of Representatives member (elected in the previous 2021 election) in your constituency is?

<Answers>

1. Not trustworthy at all 2. Not trustworthy 3. Trustworthy 4. Very trustworthy

To the above question, I believe that ( ) out of 100 people answered "4. Very trustworthy" or "3. Trustworthy".

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Q5. How much influence do you think your vote has on the election outcome?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Not much
- ☐ Some
- ☐ A great deal

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Q6. In this House of Representatives election, will you vote in the single-member district for the incumbent candidate (elected in the previous 2021 election) in your constituency?

- ☐ Vote for the incumbent
- ☐ Vote for another candidate from the same party as the incumbent
- ☐ Vote for a candidate from a different party or an independent candidate
- ☐ Do not plan to vote
- ☐ Not sure

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Q7. To what extent do you support policies that aim to make the flow of political funds more transparent, including legal reforms?

- ☐ Do not support at all
- ☐ Do not support much
- ☐ Somewhat support
- ☐ Strongly support

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Q8. Suppose you have 50,000 yen at your disposal. How much of it would you donate to an NGO working to increase the transparency of political funding?

I would like to donate (                      ) yen out of 50,000 yen.

## Endline Survey - October 28th

Thank you for accessing this survey page. This survey is being conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Osaka University, the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University, and the Faculty of Economics at Kinki University to understand public perceptions regarding elections.

This survey aims to academically investigate your thoughts and opinions leading up to the House of Representatives election.

The information you provide will be used only for academic research and not for any other purposes. The survey is anonymous, and your privacy will be fully protected. It is designed to understand your honest perspectives, without any judgment of right or wrong. We request your understanding in this regard and hope you are comfortable while answering the following questions.

Please note that if you leave the survey, any answers provided before your leave will still be submitted to the research team.

If you are able to participate, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing all the surveys.

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Q1. Did you vote in the current House of Representatives general election (national election)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

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Q2. In the single-member district of the current House of Representatives general election,

did you vote for the incumbent candidate (elected in the previous 2021 election)?

- ☐ Did not vote
- ☐ Voted for the incumbent candidate
- ☐ Voted for another candidate from the same party as the incumbent candidate
- ☐ Voted for a candidate from a different party or an independent candidate
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

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## A.5.2 Original Version

### Baseline Survey - October 18th

本アンケートページにアクセスいただきましてありがとうございます。本アンケート調査は、みなさまの「選挙に関する意識」を理解する目的のために、大阪大学社会経済研究所、早稲田大学政治経済学術院、近畿大学経済学部が共同で実施するものです。

この調査は、みなさまが今回の衆議院議員総選挙に先立ち、どのような考えを持っていらっしゃるのかを学術的に調査することを目的としています。

ご回答いただいた内容は学術調査にのみ使用され、その他の目的では一切使用されません。また、アンケートは匿名調査で、みなさまのプライバシーは完全に保護されます。アンケートはみなさまのありのままの姿を理解することを目的としており、それに関する善悪の判断をすることは一切ありません。その点をご理解いただき、気楽にお答え頂けると幸いです。

今回の調査に加えて、一部の方には、10月25日(金)と28日(月)の午後18時ごろにアンケートのご案内を行います。今回の質問数は11問、10/25(金)の質問数は8問となっており、それぞれ5分程度の完了時間を想定しています。10/28(月)の質問数は2問の簡単な調査となっており、所要時間が2分を越えることはない想定しています。

本調査では、回答を中断した場合も、中断までに回答されたデータは調査委託者に納品されます。

また、以下のマークがついている質問は、ボーナス質問です。これらの質問は、質問ごとにこの調査に参加されている皆さんの回答を集計した後、正解した方の中から100名様に追加で100円相当のポイント差し上げます。ボーナス質問は3回のアンケート合計で5問あり、最大で500円相当のポイントが獲得可能です。



ボーナス!!

ご参加頂ける方は、是非全てのアンケートにご協力くださいますよう、お願い申し上げます。

Q1 あなたの政治的価値観についてお尋ねします。あなたには支持している政党はありますか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 自民党を支持している

☐ その他与党を支持している

☐ 野党を支持している





☐ 支持している政党は無い

☐ 答えたくない

Q2 今回の衆議院議員総選挙(国政選挙)に関して、以下の点について、あなたが個人的に重視する順に1つから最大3つまで選んで下さい。

ひとつだけ

必須

	最も重視する	2番目に重視する	3番目に重視する
	↓	↓	↓
物価高	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
少子化	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
高齢化	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
気候変動・環境	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
財政	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
外交	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
年金	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
原発・エネルギー	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	最も重視する	2番目に重視する	3番目に重視する
憲法改正	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
旧統一教会問題	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
政治とカネ・裏金	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
地方創生	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
被災地援助	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
その他	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2番目／3番目に重視するものはない		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q3 今回の衆議院議員選挙の候補者のうち、あなたの選挙区の現在の衆議院議員(現職)の政党はどれですか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 自民党

☐ 立憲民主党

☐ 日本維新の会

☐ 公明党

☐ 国民民主党

☐ 日本共産党

☐ れいわ新選組

☐ 社会民主党

☐ その他の政党・無所属

☐ わからない

Q4 前回(2021年)の衆議院議員選挙では、どの政党・無所属の議員に投票しましたか。



ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 選挙に行っていない

☐ 自民党

☐ 立憲民主党

☐ 日本維新の会

☐ 公明党

☐ 国民民主党

☐ 日本共産党

☐ れいわ新選組

☐ 社会民主党

☐ その他の政党・無所属

☐ その他・答えたくない

Q5 今年の10月以降、どの程度の頻度で選挙関連のニュースに触れましたか。

ひとつだけ

必須



☐ ほぼ毎日

☐ 1週間に数回程度

☐ あまり触れていない

☐ ほとんど触れていない

Q6 あなたは、日本の政治家の何%ぐらいが「政治資金収支報告書への記載漏れや政治資金のキックバック」問題に関係していると思いますか。

必須

%

ボーナス!!

Q7 この調査プロジェクトには、様々な方々が集まっており、調査参加者の回答は、日本の平均的な有権者の見解と態度を表しているといえます。

以下の質問について、私たちが尋ねた中の100人のうち、何人が  
「全く許容できない」または  
「それほど許容できない」と答えたと思いますか。

<質問>

あなたは、「政治資金収支報告書への記載漏れや政治資金のキックバック」問題についてどれぐらい許容できますか。

<回答>

1.全く許容できない、2.それほど許容できない、3.まあ許容できる、4.全く許容できる

必須

上記の質問で、100人中

人が、「1.全く許容できない」または「2.それほど許容できない」と答えたと思う

Q8 あなたの最終学歴をお答えください。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 中学卒

☐ 高校卒

☐ 短大・高専・専門学校卒

☐ 大学・大学院卒

Q9 あなたの婚姻状況をお答えください。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 既婚

☐ 未婚

☐ 離死別

Q10 あなたのご家庭の同居人数をお答えください。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 1人 (1人暮らし)

☐ 2人

☐ 3人

☐ 4人

☐ 5人



☐ 6人

☐ 7人以上

Q11 2023年のあなたのご家庭の世帯年収（税引き前）をお答えください。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 200万円未満

☐ 200万円～400万円未満

☐ 400万円～600万円未満

☐ 600万円～800万円未満

☐ 800万円～1000万円未満

☐ 1000万円～1200万円未満

☐ 1200万円～1500万円未満

☐ 1500万円～2000万円未満

☐ 2000万円～3000万円未満



☐ 3000万円～5000万円未満

☐ 5000万円以上



## Intervention & Post-treatment survey - October 25th

本アンケートページにアクセスしていただきましてありがとうございます。本アンケート調査は、みなさまの「選挙に関する意識」を理解する目的のために、大阪大学社会経済研究所、早稲田

大学政治経済学術院、近畿大学経済学部が共同で実施するものです。

この調査は、みなさまが今回の衆議院議員総選挙に先立ち、どのような考えを持っていらっしゃるのかを学術的に調査することを目的としています。

ご回答いただいた内容は学術調査にのみ使用され、その他の目的では一切使用されません。また、アンケートは匿名調査で、みなさまのプライバシーは完全に保護されます。アンケートはみなさまのありのままの姿を理解することを目的としており、それに関する善悪の判断をすることは一切ありません。その点をご理解いただき、気楽にお答え頂けると幸いです。

本調査では、回答を中断した場合も、中断までに回答されたデータは調査委託者に納品されます。

また、以下のマークがついている質問は、ボーナス質問です。これらの質問は、質問ごとにこの調査に参加されている皆さんの回答を集計した後、正解した方の中から100名様に追加で100円相当のポイント差し上げます。ボーナス質問は3回のアンケート合計で5問あり、最大で500円相当のポイントが獲得可能です。



**ボーナス!!**

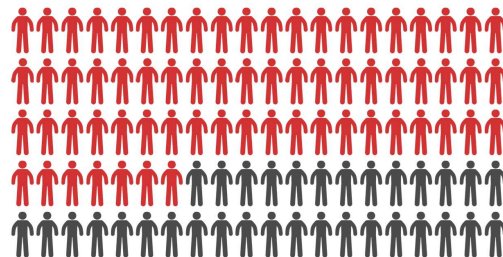
ご参加頂ける方は、是非全てのアンケートにご協力くださいますよう、お願い申し上げます。

この調査プロジェクトには、様々な方々が集まっており、調査参加者の回答は、日本の平均的な有権者の見解と態度を表しているといえます。前回の調査では、「政治資金収支報告書への記載漏れや政治資金のキックバック」について、他の回答者の中に、「全く許容できない」または「それほど許容できない」と考えている方がどれぐらいいるかお聞きしました。

その結果、100人のうち、67人が「政治資金収支報告書への記載漏れや政治資金のキックバック」を「全く許容できない」または「それほど許容できない」と考えていることがわかりました。

**67%**の人が政治資金収支報告書への  
記載漏れやキックバックを

「全く許容できない」または  
「それほど許容できない」と考えています



ボーナス!!

この調査プロジェクトには、様々な方々が集まっており、調査参加者の回答は、日本の平均的な有権者の見解と態度を表しているといえます。

Q1 あなたのお考えについてお聞きます。

以下の質問に関して、 私たちが尋ねた中の、あなたの選挙区の人たち100人のうち、何人が自分たちの選挙区の現職候補に「投票する」と答えたと思いますか。

<質問>

あなたは今回の選挙で、自分の選挙区の現職候補に投票しますか。

<回答>

1. 投票する 2. 投票しない

必須

上記の質問で、100人中

人が、「1. 投票する」と答えたと思う

ボーナス!!

Q2 同様に、あなたのお考えについてお聞きします。

以下の質問に関して、私たちが尋ねた中の、あなたの選挙区の人たち100人のうち、何人が自分たちの選挙区の現職候補に「投票すべき」と答えたと思いますか。

<質問>

あなたは今回の選挙で、自分の選挙区の現職候補に投票すべきだと思いますか。

<回答>

1. 投票すべき 2. 投票すべきではない

必須

上記の質問で、100人中

人が、「1. 投票すべき」と答えたと思う

ボーナス!!

Q3 同様に、あなたのお考えについてお聞きします。

以下の質問に関して、私たちが尋ねた中の、あなたの選挙区の人たち100人のうち、何人が自分たちの選挙区の現職の衆議院議員（前回の選挙（2021年）で当選した人）は「とても能力がある」または「能力がある」と答えたと思いますか。

＜質問＞

あなたは、自分の選挙区の現職の衆議院議員（前回の選挙（2021年）で当選した人）にはどれぐらい能力があると思いますか。

＜回答＞

1. 全く能力がない 2. 能力がない 3. 能力がある 4. とても能力がある

必須

上記の質問で、100人中

人が、「4. とても能力がある」または「3. 能力がある」と答えたと思う

ボーナス!!

Q4 同様に、あなたのお考えについてお聞きします。

以下の質問に関して、私たちが尋ねた中の、あなたの選挙区の人たち100人のうち、何人が自分たちの選挙区の現職の衆議院議員（前回の選挙（2021年）で当選した人）は「とても信頼できる」または「信頼できる」と答えたと思いますか。

<質問>

あなたは、自分の選挙区の現職の衆議院議員（前回の選挙（2021年）で当選した人）はどれくらい信頼できますか。

<回答>

1. 全く信頼できない 2. 信頼できない 3. 信頼できる 4. とても信頼できる

必須

上記の質問で、100人中

人が、「4. とても信頼できる」または「3. 信頼できる」と答えたと思う

Q5 あなたの票は、選挙結果に対してどれぐらい影響力があると思いますか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 全くない

☐ あまりない

☐ 少しある

☐ とてもある

Q6 あなたは今回の衆議院議員選挙の小選挙区で、自分の選挙区の現職候補(前回の選挙(2021年)で当選した人)に投票しますか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 現職に投票する

☐ 現職と同じ政党だが別の候補者に投票する

☐ 現職とは別の政党・無所属の候補者に投票する

☐ 選挙に行く予定はない

☐ わからない

Q7 あなたは、法改正などを含め、政治資金の流れをより透明にする政策をどれぐらい支持しますか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 全く支持しない

☐それほど支持しない

☐ まあ支持する

☐ 強く支持する

Q8 仮に自由に使える5万円が手元にあるとします。そのうちの一部を、政治資金の透明性を高める活動をしているNGOに寄付できるとします。あなたは、5万円のうちいくらを寄付しますか。

必須

5万円のうち、

円、寄付する



## Endline Survey - October 28th

本アンケートページにアクセスしていただきましてありがとうございます。本アンケート調査は、みなさまの「選挙に関する意識」を理解する目的のために、大阪大学社会経済研究所、早稲田大学政治経済学術院、近畿大学経済学部が共同で実施するものです。

この調査は、みなさまが今回の衆議院議員総選挙に先立ち、どのような考えを持っていらっしゃるのかを学術的に調査することを目的としています。

ご回答いただいた内容は学術調査にのみ使用され、その他の目的では一切使用されません。また、アンケートは匿名調査で、みなさまのプライバシーは完全に保護されます。アンケートはみなさまのありのままの姿を理解することを目的としており、それに関する善悪の判断をすることは一切ありません。その点をご理解いただき、気楽にお答え頂けると幸いです。

本調査では、回答を中断した場合も、中断までに回答されたデータは調査委託者に納品されます。

ご参加頂ける方は、是非全てのアンケートにご協力くださいますよう、お願い申し上げます。

Q1 あなたは今回の衆議院議員総選挙(国政選挙)で投票しましたか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ はい

☐ いいえ

☐ 答えたくない

Q2 あなたは今回の衆議院議員選挙の小選挙区で、現職候補(前回の選挙(2021年)で当選した人)に投票しましたか。

ひとつだけ

必須

☐ 選挙に行っていない

☐ 現職に投票した

☐ 現職と同じ政党だが別の候補者に投票した

☐ 現職とは別の政党・無所属の候補者に投票した

☐ 答えたくない