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The Multidimensionality of Electoral Fraud in Colombia:
How Do Political Parties Choose Between Electoral Manipulation Methods?

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Abstract

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This study examines the nature of electoral fraud in today's democratic world. It attempts to contribute to Political Science at large by examining two different forms of electoral fraud in Colombia: vote buying and political violence. The hope is to better understand factors that facilitate electoral fraud despite democracy. In order to do so, I analyze whether the strategic use of particular forms of electoral fraud depend on certain voter characteristics. By doing so, we begin to understand the calculated choices parties make when manipulating elections. This study analyzes a survey distributed amongst a varied group of Colombian voters in 2012 and aims to demonstrate how factors such as socioeconomic levels and strength of political ideology can influence electoral fraud strategies. I will focus specifically on Colombia, where electoral fraud occurs frequently, regardless of the presence of strong democratic institutions, making it ideal for political exploration and study. I conclude that the socioeconomic levels and strength of political preferences of a voter are directly correlated with vote buying. I also observe that, although these relationships have not been precisely estimated, the perpetration of electoral violence displays a positive relationship with strong political preferences, and a negative relationship with low socioeconomic status. Ultimately, this thesis explains the role of voter demographics in determining the use of electoral fraud.

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, democracy has become the mainstream political system for nations operating in the global community. The fall of the Soviet Union heralded in an era in which universal suffrage has become increasingly common. However, in many countries, poor institutions and corrupt leaders have stymied this movement towards democracy. In Colombia, for instance, which has been a nominal democracy since the nineteenth century, political parties continue to engage in electoral manipulation.¹ Elsewhere, this practice has plagued democratic nations with the model of neo-authoritarianism², where political parties have successfully exploited aspects of liberal democracy as a façade to disguise their autocratic nature. Neo-authoritarianism includes: the promotion of political competition while allowing minimal opposition to survive, the use of elections as a means to display legitimacy to the international community, and the use political intimidation to control voters.³ Despite these observations, there is little understanding of how manipulation takes place, particularly how parties choose among strategies.

In order to raise awareness of electoral manipulation and strengthen democratic institutions, the global community must understand the strategies behind electoral fraud. This allows citizens the capacity to make safe and informed voting decisions. Electoral fraud is usually understood as intentional vote rigging and/or interfering illegally during

¹ Osterling, J. P. 1988. *Democracy in Colombia: Clientelistic Politics and Guerrilla Warfare*. Transaction Publisher.

² Stokes, Susan Carol. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*.

³ Kornblith, Miriam. 2005. *Elections Versus Democracy*. Journal of Democracy. Vol 16.

the process of an election.⁴ As the field of Political Science has grown, it is clear that the definition of electoral fraud has expanded along with it. Now electoral fraud encompasses both vote buying and political violence.⁵ This expansion has allowed for illiberal democracies to choose between various manipulation strategies. By closely studying these democracies, we can begin to understand the calculated choices parties make when manipulating elections, and move one step closer towards strengthening global democracy.

For this reason, I formulate a theory that links socioeconomic levels and strength of political preferences to observed levels of electoral manipulation. By monitoring example cases, it is possible to identify trends within electoral manipulation. This will result in a stronger understanding of venal political parties in democracies with strong institutions. In particular, I explore a survey distributed by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)⁶ that offers a thorough dataset of both the voter demographics in Colombia in 2012 and the prevalence of electoral fraud.

Throughout this examination, I focus specifically on Colombia, a country whose democracy emerged during the first wave of democratization in the early nineteenth century.⁷ Recognized as the second oldest democracy in the western hemisphere, Colombia has had the fortune of evading the frequent military coups that its neighboring

⁴ Kornblith, Miriam. 2005. *Elections Versus Democracy*. Journal of Democracy. Vol 16.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Rodriguez, J. C. 2012. *Vanderbilt LAPOP Dataset Colombia*. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://datasets.americasbarometer.org/database-login/usersearch.php>

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 14-15.

countries have had to undergo.⁸ Colombia presents an interesting case study because, despite its middle-income status⁹ and formal democratic institutions, it continues to be a country plagued by centuries of electoral manipulation and violence.¹⁰ These paradoxical factors make Colombia an ideal case study. Even with formal democratic institutions, electoral corruption continues to be widespread. Understanding Colombia could provide insight into how formal institutions are systematically circumvented by politicians and political parties in other illiberal democracies.

Within my examination of Colombia, I found that specific voter characteristics were correlated with specific forms of manipulation. Specifically, it was evident that both socioeconomic class and strength of political ideology can be linked to vote buying. I also observed that, although the relationships were not precisely estimated, electoral violence had a positive relationship with strength of political preferences, and a negative relationship with socioeconomic status. I strongly believe that continued research on this theory is necessary, and will be able to strengthen understanding of processes of electoral fraud and offer insight on the connection between electoral manipulation and the characteristics of a party's target voters.

Literature Review:

Democracies, Political Parties, & Electoral Fraud:

⁸ John Chasteen. 2001. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* New York: Norton.

⁹ Colombia. 2016. Retrieved March 11, 2016, from <http://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia>

¹⁰ Babbit, E., & Lutz, E. L. 2009. *Human rights and Conflict Resolutions in Context: Colombia, Sierra Leone, & Northern Ireland* (1st. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

In recent decades, there has been substantial research conducted on the failures of illiberal democracies and their alleged electoral fraud through practices such as vote buying and political violence. Experts such as Susan Stokes¹¹, Frederic Schaffer¹², and Simeon Nichter¹³ have conducted studies on vote buying and have worked to define electoral manipulation. Their research focuses primarily on why electoral malpractices such as vote buying are successful. Building on these accounts, this study analyzes how political parties decide to use different forms of manipulation. It takes a close look at socioeconomic levels and the strength of political alignment as possible explanations in guiding this decision.

The emergence of illiberal democracies that suffer manipulation despite having strong institutions is a fairly new concept. Political scientists have only recently tried to categorize this phenomenon. These new forms of manipulation are often hidden in the democratic nature of the state, making it difficult to study empirically. This ultimately presents an interesting paradox, one that allows for illiberal regimes to function behind a democratic façade. It is these manipulative capabilities that are disconcerting for the success of democratic elections.

The literature suggests that there are vast differences amongst forms of manipulation.¹⁴ However, there has yet to be a study that categorizes these forms by how

¹¹ Stokes, Susan Carol. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*.

¹² Schaffer, Frederic C. 2002. "What Is Vote Buying?" *Center for International Studies at MIT*.

¹³ Nichter, S. 2014. Conceptualizing vote buying. *Electoral Studies*, 35, 315-327.

¹⁴ Stokes, Susan Carol. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*.

they are utilized among specific voters. Therefore, this study takes a look at electoral fraud and assesses it as a systematic and institutionalized tactic that is strategically used on specific kinds of voters to win elections. Studies such as Ziblatt's¹⁵ suggest that certain factors can be a catalyst for electoral fraud, which in his case is landholding inequality. **This study seeks to further this research, and to answer not only what factors amongst Colombian voters are being used to trigger electoral fraud, but also how these factors shape the specific type of manipulation being used.**

Vote Buying Literature:

Although the concept of vote buying appears simple and self-explanatory, there are competing interpretations as to what it encompasses. To better define this, I turned to the work of Andreas Schedler.¹⁶ Schedler breaks down vote buying into four parts: payments, gifts, retributions, and signs. This expands the boundaries of vote buying into a complex system of exchange that tarnishes democratic reputability. In recent decades, the use of vote buying has increased exponentially.¹⁷ In fact, Nichter argues that this enlargement has had negative consequences for empirical analyses of vote buying, broadening the definition of vote buying further than it should.¹⁸ In my theory, I will develop my own definition of vote buying in order to reduce ambiguity.

¹⁵ Ziblatt, Daniel. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." *American Political Science Review* 103.01 (2009): 1.

¹⁶ Schedler, A. (2002). What Is Vote Buying? *Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT), Center for International Studies*.

¹⁷ Nichter, S. (2014). Conceptualizing vote buying. *Electoral Studies*, 35, 315-327.

¹⁸ Ibid.

When vote buying first emerged as a form of electoral fraud, much of the literature on it suggested that its success was due to feelings of reciprocity and moral obligation.¹⁹ In other words, voters felt accountable and thus cooperated with the bribes. However, recent studies argue that individual voters do not always view their bribes as a moral contract.²⁰ This means that that the attempted use of vote buying can sometimes be strongly influenced by the characteristics of individual voters and/or a voter's community. Although moral obligation plays a large role in the exchange of vote buying, this paper analyzes other contributing factors and focuses on how voter demographics can influence the type of electoral fraud that will be used on a voter. These characteristics have contributed to the success of vote buying, as demonstrated by studies in Germany²¹, Thailand²², and Southeast Asia.²³ There are various other factors that can influence vote buying, such as socioeconomic levels and the strength of political alignment. Taking this into account, my paper offers the first attempt to categorize contributing factors to different forms of electoral manipulation such as vote buying.

Electoral Violence Literature:

¹⁹ White, J. H. 1965. "Landlord Influence at Elections in Ireland, 1760-1885." *The English Historical Review* 80:740–760.

²⁰ Stokes, Susan C. 2005. "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina." *American Political Science Review* 99(3):315–325.

²¹ Ziblatt, Daniel. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." *American Political Science Review* 103.01 (2009): 1.

²² Callahan, William A. and Duncan McCargo. 1996. "Vote-Buying in Thailand's Northeast: The July 1995 General Election." *Asian Survey* 36:376–392

²³ Scott, James C. 1972. "Patron-client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia." *The American Political Science Review* 66(1):91–113.

Electoral violence is the most dangerous form of electoral fraud, and arguably the most effective.²⁴ It is a form of intimidation that can be used against a voter, a voter's family, or even a voter's community.²⁵ By inciting high levels of fear amongst individual voters, violent actors are able to coerce an individual, or even an entire community's vote. Political violence can have boundless effects on the outcome of an election. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to empirically study this form of manipulation, its inner workings, and its specific targets during the electoral period. This information will aid in formulating new strategies to combat electoral violence.

The literature suggests that sub-national actors such as paramilitary organizations usually execute political violence.²⁶ This is done to create plausible deniability by concealing any link between the government and the perpetrator.²⁷ Resultantly, political violence is often confused with common crime. This is especially important because like vote buying, political violence can completely change the results of an election. Citizens are more likely to support a candidate or party that is backed by the dominant armed actor.²⁸ Additionally, voters who live in contested areas are the least likely to actively participate in elections.²⁹

Background:

²⁴ Garcia, M. 2009. Political Violence and Electoral Democracy in Colombia: Participation and Voting Behavior in Violent Contexts. *University of Pittsburgh*.

²⁵ Garcia, M. 2009. Political Violence and Electoral Democracy in Colombia: Participation and Voting Behavior in Violent Contexts. *University of Pittsburgh*.

²⁶ Garcia, M. 2009. Political Violence and Electoral Democracy in Colombia: Participation and Voting Behavior in Violent Contexts. *University of Pittsburgh*.

²⁷ Collier, Paul, and Pedro C. Vicente. 2011. "Violence, Bribery, and Fraud: The Political Economy Of elections in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Public Choice* 153.1-2: 117-47. Web.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Colombia:

Historically, Colombia is one of the world's oldest functioning democracies.³⁰ Despite its democratic nature, it is a country that has suffered vast levels of political violence, corruption, and inequality.³¹ It is a remarkable case to study because this nation should, in theory, be thriving; however, this is hardly the case. Colombia suffers from mass political corruption, which hinders the nation's progress towards successful democratization.³² Over the past century, Colombia has become one of the most dangerous and politically volatile countries in the world.³³ Colombia is also unique in its political nature as it is Latin America's oldest democracy. For the purpose of this research, it is best to define Colombia as an illiberal democracy that has suffered electoral fraud and all-around corruption for decades.

Though Colombia has traditionally been comprised of a two party system, several new popular political parties have recently proliferated.³⁴ Nevertheless, the oldest of these parties established themselves in the 1840s after Colombia gained its independence from Spain in 1810. The Colombian Liberal Party and The Colombian Conservative Party remain at the forefront of the nation's political discourse surrounding the battle for power.³⁵ The Colombian political scene continues to suffer from violence and electoral

³⁰ Wong, K. 2008. Colombia: A Case Study in the Role of the Affected State in Humanitarian Action. *Humanitarian Policy Group*.

³¹ Wong, K. 2008. Colombia: A Case Study in the Role of the Affected State in Humanitarian Action. *Humanitarian Policy Group*.

³² Palacios, M. 2006. *Between legitimacy and violence: A history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. Durham: Duke University Press.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Lorente, Roberto. 2010. *An Analysis of Colombia's Democracy*. Tufts University.

³⁵ Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J., & Santos, R. 2009. *The Monopoly of Violence: Evidence from Colombia*

manipulation. This allows for a hostile political environment plagued by violence, fraud, poverty, and insecurity.

Moreover, non-state armed actors have involved themselves in Colombian politics, generating high levels of political violence and civil wars. The most violent of these wars, “La Violencia,” culminated with a peace treaty in 1958 that was ratified by both The Colombian Liberal Party and The Colombian Conservative Party.³⁶ This treaty allowed for an established election process. It was here that the rise of non-governmental actors within Colombia began. In 1964, two left-wing revolutionary armed forces, The FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and The ELN (The National Liberation Army) were established. Later, in April of 1997, The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a right-wing revolutionary armed force was born.³⁷

These armed actors are known for their violence when it comes to influencing elections and persuading individuals to vote in a certain manner. This violence is not only felt within the electoral system but also in peace deals, plaguing them with bloodshed and corruption.³⁸ This bloodshed has shaped the Colombian electoral culture and the norm of electoral violence. Studies suggest that paramilitary presence in Colombia is associated

³⁶ Babbit, E., & Lutz, E. L. 2009. *Human rights and Conflict Resolutions in Context: Colombia, Sierra Leone, & Northern Ireland* (1st. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

³⁷ Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J., & Santos, R. 2009. *The Monopoly of Violence: Evidence from Colombia*.

³⁸ Babbit, E., & Lutz, E. L. 2009. *Human rights and Conflict Resolutions in Context: Colombia, Sierra Leone, & Northern Ireland* (1st. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

with a greater concentration of votes within a municipality in legislative elections.³⁹ Additionally, this paramilitary activity has also been linked to support for politicians who have worked with and not against these organized groups.⁴⁰ Thus, it can be argued that Colombia is a country controlled by non-state actors who have a monopoly over elections in some regions.

Due to its high levels of political polarization, Colombia has developed into a country that has held several elections while simultaneously facing ongoing violent civil wars. Widespread electoral violence is the norm during electoral periods. Michael Weintraub makes the claim that in Colombia, direct exposure to electoral violence can push a voter and even a community to favor a particular incumbent.⁴¹ Historical legacies of political violence support the notion that this method of manipulation can significantly shape a voter's choice.⁴² Electoral violence has left a legacy in the Colombian political culture that is a desirable model for my study.

All of these factors have unequivocally raised the risk of violence and electoral manipulation in Colombia. In early 2015, the country's Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) found that nearly 20% of the 1,101 municipalities would be affected by such

³⁹ Garcia, M. 2009. Political Violence and Electoral Democracy in Colombia: Participation and Voting Behavior in Violent Contexts. *University of Pittsburgh*.

⁴⁰ Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J., & Santos, R. 2009. The Monopoly of Violence: Evidence from Colombia.

⁴¹ Weintraub, M., Vargas, J. F., & Flores, T. E. 2015. Vote choice and legacies of violence: Evidence from the 2014 Colombian presidential elections. *Research & Politics*.

⁴² Ibid.

corruption in the coming election.⁴³ These manipulations manifest themselves in different ways. There are inaccurate and fraudulent voter registrations, including those who are deceased on voter rolls, vote buying, and violence by illegal armed groups; all of which simultaneously jeopardize Colombia's electoral system.⁴⁴ The Colombian framework has and continues to fall apart at the seam, endangering the stability of Colombia's democratic institutions. For this reason, I am studying Colombia in hopes of identifying the process by which these methods of electoral manipulation are chosen.

The information used in this study was collected in 2012 but asks questions about the 2010 elections. In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of the Social Party of National Unity, also referred to as The Party of the U, was elected as the 32nd President of Colombia with 69.1% of the vote during this election. Colombia conducts its elections using a plurality rule that includes a runoff election if necessary. It also uses the Australian Ballot, called El Tarjeton, in order to ensure complete discretion. Regardless, electoral manipulation is still alive during, and even before, the electoral period.

Political violence, vote buying, and poverty all play a concrete role in influencing the proliferation of electoral fraud. Moreover, Colombia's polarized party system continues to take advantage of its weak electoral system to influence voting and undermine democratic efforts. Much of this insurgency results from indirect forces such

⁴³ Brown, G. 2015. Colombia's upcoming elections threatened by violence and fraud: Observers. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from <http://colombiareports.com/colombias-upcoming-elections-threatened-by-violence-and-fraud-observers/>

⁴⁴ Brown, G. 2015. Colombia's upcoming elections threatened by violence and fraud: Observers. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from <http://colombiareports.com/colombias-upcoming-elections-threatened-by-violence-and-fraud-observers/>

as paramilitaries that have influenced the political process in Colombia. Therefore, although Colombia is one of the few countries where dictatorships and coups have not been prominent, electoral manipulation continues to be present.

Theory:

For the purposes of my research, I will define vote buying as any bribe offered by a party or the government that has value for an individual in return for their vote. I will not define it simply as monetary value, as the question asked in the LAPOP survey includes bribes related to favors, food, or monetary items.⁴⁵ Furthermore, I will define political violence as it is defined in the LAPOP survey. This includes any form of threat that has been imposed on a voter pressuring him or her to vote for a particular candidate or political party.⁴⁶

In recent years, the literature on vote buying has grown exponentially, becoming the most studied form of electoral manipulation.⁴⁷ I believe two factors may explain the rise of literature surrounding vote buying. First, it may be due to the popularity of vote buying as a form of coercion. Second, it could be a result of class-bias that political scientists may have when studying electoral fraud in failing democracies. The latter would explain why literature on vote buying is so prominent, because as my hypothesis suggests, it occurs most often in low socioeconomic districts. This has led to various arguments on what triggers vote buying and why it is successful.

⁴⁵ Rodriguez, J. C. 2012. Vanderbilt LAPOP Dataset Colombia. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from <http://datasets.americasbarometer.org/database-login/usersearch.php>

⁴⁶ Rodriguez, J. C. 2012. Vanderbilt LAPOP Dataset Colombia. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from <http://datasets.americasbarometer.org/database-login/usersearch.php>

⁴⁷ Nichter, S. (2014). Conceptualizing vote buying. *Electoral Studies*, 35, 315-327.

Vote buying is most successful in areas where voters are susceptible to bribery. Illiberal democracies often suffer large-scale inequality due to the rapidly urbanizing nature of their environments that produce a large, poor, and rural population.⁴⁸ Having an economically polarized civil society often gives incentives for political parties to engage in vote buying because there are large groups of low income voters who are willing to accept bribes. Such manipulation highlights the fragility of democratic institutions, and denotes the importance of studying the method in which these practices take form to standardize preventative efforts.

It is for this reason that I will study the following question: **How do parties choose between electoral manipulation methods?** The theory behind my hypotheses lies in implications provided by the literature available on electoral fraud. I believe the strategy behind electoral manipulation is centered on matching the most effective form for a specific type of voter. The logic behind electoral manipulation is that in a democracy with electoral competition, corrupt political parties have strong incentives to manipulate voters into voting a particular way. Democracy thus becomes distorted by polarizing politics. In analyzing my first form of manipulation, I believe that voters of low socioeconomic strata levels are far more inclined to accept vote-buying methods than those in higher levels. This is due to their desperation for basic goods and services. Voters with high socioeconomic levels are not as easily purchased or controlled, they will either take the bribe but not vote for that party or not take it at all. Education, which is usually linked to socioeconomic strata, also plays a defining role. Educated voters usually

⁴⁸ Ichino, Nahomi, and Matthias Schündeln. 2012. 'Deterring Or Displacing Electoral Irregularities? Spillover Effects Of Observers In A Randomized Field Experiment In Ghana'. *J Of Pol* 74 (01): 292-307. doi:10.1017/s0022381611001368.

understand their vote is secret. Therefore, I believe voters with a higher socioeconomic stratum are more inclined to take the money and run because they understand that with a secret ballot they are not as accountable as it may appear. This means not all voters can be purchased. Thus, the manipulative actors must use alternative methods of electoral fraud on these voters, such as electoral violence.

The need to use alternative methods of electoral fraud paves the way for political violence. When confronting voters with a strong political alignment it is clear to the manipulating actor that the voter's vote has been predetermined and cannot be purchased. As the manipulating actor becomes increasingly aware that vote buying will not work, I theorize, that such voters will be targeted with alternative methods such as political violence. This, in theory, will force them to vote in a particular manner. Voters without a strong political alignment are seen as undecided voters. These voters can be shifted and persuaded with financial incentives. Taking this theory into account, it is also important to note that these forms of manipulation are not mutually exclusive. There are alternative forms of manipulation besides electoral violence. However, due to the fact that this is the first study on how political parties choose between electoral manipulation methods and considering the scope of this examination, I will only be studying two forms of manipulation. It is my hope that this study will be expanded with research on other forms of manipulation.

As a result of the simultaneous conditions that I believe are at play when establishing a hybrid regime with fraudulent elections, I propose the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis (H1): Voters with high socioeconomic levels will experience higher levels of political violence, whereas voters with low socioeconomic levels will experience high levels of vote buying instead.

Hypothesis (H2): Voters who are already ideologically attached to a party and/or candidate will be targeted with political violence, whereas voters who are unsure and/or easily swayed will be targeted with vote buying.

I expect to find that in countries with a politically violent climate and weak institutions, it is possible to predict what form of electoral fraud will be used on what voter. The goal of my research design is to establish a relationship between form of electoral fraud and type of voter. To do so, I will test my hypotheses through an OLS regression analysis.

Research Design

To test my hypotheses, I will study differences in the exposure to electoral manipulation experienced by Colombian voters. An advantage of focusing solely on Colombia is that such an analysis will allow for variables such as culture, region, and regime type to be controlled for. I will be using socioeconomic levels and strength of political alignment as my independent variables and vote buying and political violence as my dependent variables. It is important to note that socioeconomic levels and strength of political alignment are not the only explanatory variables for electoral fraud, just as vote buying and electoral violence are not the only forms of electoral manipulation. Socioeconomic levels as a determinant of electoral manipulation has been studied extensively, while strength of political alignment has yet to be researched, this makes for interesting explanatory variables on opposite ends of the research spectrum. Vote buying and electoral violence are my choices for dependent variables because of the extensive literature on them as forms of manipulation. However, these are also not mutually

exclusive. They are two of what I believe are many forms of manipulation, and for the scope of this study I will only be focusing on these two.

To test my hypotheses, I will be looking at 1,512 voters in Colombia. I am advantaged by a rich and varied data set. These 1,512 voters will serve as my unit of analysis, as they all participated in a 2012 survey distributed through Colombia by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), funded by Vanderbilt University from March 1st – April 20th, 2012. In the 2012 AmericasBarometer, LAPOP successfully used a sample design that reflected the population changes as revealed by recent census information.⁴⁹ Moreover, this 2012 Colombian survey is the only survey out of 23 countries and across the 6 years examined that had both the question on vote buying and electoral violence in it. This makes this survey incredibly vital and innovative for my study. The changes in the 2012 AmericasBarometer make focusing on this particular year even more ideal as a unit for a statistical analysis.

As can be seen in Table 1, the set of voters I examine are fairly young, ranging from ages 18 – 27. They are evenly divided between gender, 50% male and 50% female. Approximately 75% of the voters surveyed reside in urban areas, while the other 25% live in rural areas. A large majority of the voters have the education level of a high school graduate. Each participant in this survey took part in a face-to-face interview conducted in Spanish in addition to the written survey. Please refer to the appendix for the exact questions used in this study.

⁴⁹ Rodriguez, J. C. 2012. Vanderbilt LAPOP Dataset Colombia. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from <http://datasets.americasbarometer.org/database-login/usersearch.php>

Figure 1: Summary Statistics of Dependent, Independent, & Control Variables

Summary of Variables	# Of observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Vote Buying (Dependent)	1,494	.253	.435	0	1
Electoral Violence (Dependent)	1,460	.028	.165	0	1
Socioeconomic Levels (Independent)	924	2.604	1.230	1	6
Strong Political Preferences 1 (Independent)	1,205	.461	.499	0	1
Strong Political Preferences 2 (Independent)	1,498	.247	.431	0	1
Urban vs. Rural (Control)	1,502	.749	.434	0	1
Education (Control)	1,445	9.582	4.342	0	17
Age (Control)	1,512	1.001	.817	0	2

Gender (Control)	1,512	.5	.500	0	1
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Variables:

Vote buying is the first form of electoral fraud I am using for my research. As a dependent variable, I will be measuring this variable by how the voters responded when asked if someone and/or an organization had ever attempted to purchase his or her vote. I measured vote buying with a variable that takes the value of 1 if the voter responded that he or she had been offered a bribe, and 0 if they had not.

Political violence is the second form of electoral fraud and the second dependent variable I will be observing. Violence and intimidation are often used as tools for political control. I will measure this variable by how the voters responded when asked if they had ever been threatened to vote in a particular manner. I qualify electoral threats as electoral violence in my definition of this dependent variable. I measured political violence with a variable that takes the value of 1 when the voter responded yes to being a victim of political violence, and 0 otherwise.

My first independent variable is the socioeconomic status of voters. To measure these levels, I selected a question from the LAPOP survey that asked voters to rank their socioeconomic strata. Socioeconomic strata is a number assigned to citizens by the Colombian government that ranges from 1 to 6 and is calculated based on where the voter lives and his or her tax bracket. In this variable, 1 is associated with the lowest strata ranking, and 6 with the highest.

My second independent variable is the strength of the voter's political ideology. I define this by how strongly the voter feels toward a particular party and/or ideology, i.e. how fixed is the voter's vote. I will measure this by how strongly they aligned themselves to a particular ideology in the survey. In order to do this I focus on two questions. The first question asked the voters to rank themselves based on their ideology from 1 to 10 (left-winged to right-winged). With the answers to this question, I coded a new variable (strong political preferences #1) that took the value of 1 for voters that felt strongly towards a particular ideology (i.e. 1-3 or 7-10) and 0 for voters who did not feel as strongly and could be seen as moderate (i.e. 4-7). The second survey question I used to measure strong political preferences asks the voter to pick a political party if they strongly align with one. I took their answers and created a new variable (strong political preferences #2), which took the value of 1 when the voter felt strongly towards a political party, and 0 when he or she did not.

Control Variables:

In order to calculate the impact of political ideology strength and socioeconomic levels on the practices of electoral manipulation, it is imperative to control for the various factors that could affect my explanatory variables of interest and electoral violence or vote buying. The factors I chose to control for were age, gender, education, and geography.

My first control is a dummy variable of rural and urban areas. Due to the wide-ranging differences between Colombia's rural and urban population, I must control for rural and urban voters. Industrialization and urbanization influence the strength of a

democracy,⁵⁰ and thus could influence my findings. Furthermore, the probability of a successful democracy is higher in more urban and wealthier areas of a country,⁵¹ which provides yet another reason to take this factor into account.

My second control is a dummy variable for education. In democracies like Colombia's, electoral districts with low levels of education are more prone to having a failing democracy and therefore struggle with the electoral process.⁵² This makes it easier for tactics such as vote buying and electoral violence to take place on individual voters that live in these districts. Low levels of education are also often tied with lower socioeconomic strata.⁵³ Lastly, voters with higher levels of education tend to have stronger political preferences because they are more inclined to be politically involved. I will also be controlling for age and gender as these factors have been used in other studies as determinants for vote buying.

Model:

Figure 2: OLS Regression Model

I plan to test my hypotheses estimating an equation of the form:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \Delta Z_i + E_i$$

Here, Y_i denotes a form of electoral manipulation, which can be vote buying or electoral violence, and i denotes individual voters. X_{1i} denotes socioeconomic status of i and X_{2i}

⁵⁰ Ziblatt, Daniel. 2009. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." *American Political Science Review* 103.01.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Boix, Charles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

⁵³ Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53 (1): 69-105

denotes strong visible political preferences of i , both are explanatory variables. Z_i is a vector of control variables that include age, gender, education, and rural versus urban geography of i . Lastly, E_i captures all other factors that determine levels of electoral manipulation.

According to H1, I should expect β_1 to be negative when the dependent variable is vote buying and positive when it is electoral violence.

According to H3, I should expect β_2 to be negative when the dependent variable is vote buying and positive when it is electoral violence.

OLS Regressions and Results:

Figure 3: Standard Regression Model Results

	Model 1: Vote Buying	Model 2: Vote Buying	Model 3: Vote Buying	Model 4: Political Violence	Model 5: Political Violence	Model 6: Political Violence	Model 7: Political Violence
Socioeconomic levels	-.032 ⁵⁴ (.016)	-.03 (.037)	-.032 (.013)			-.003 (.4)	-.007 (.2)
Strength of political alignment #1		.008 (.814)		-.012 (.2)			-.007 (.5)
Strength of political alignment #2			.093 (.009)		.011 (.2)	.014 (.2)	
Gender	-.053 (.05)	-.046 (.16)	-.042 (.137)	.016 (.079)	.014 (.06)	.015 (.1)	.02 (.08)
Age	-.014 (.46)	-.024 (.26)	-.022 (.252)	.003 (.6)	.001 (.8)	.007 (.28)	.01 (.19)
Urban vs. Rural	.08 (.05)	.069 (.16)	.098 (.019)	-.015 (.18)	-.01 (.2)	-.026 (.07)	-.029 (.1)

⁵⁴ Figure 3 reports coefficients on the variables of interest and in parentheses the p-values.

Education	.01 (.008)	.010 (.03)	.010 (.01)	.001 (.26)	.002 (.05)	.003 (.03)	.002 (.2)
Constant	.17 (.005)	.198 (.007)	.146 (.015)	.017 (.3)	-.0005 (.97)	.002 (.9)	.029 (.28)
Observations In this specific model	867	698	858	1,138	1,414	865	701

Figure 3 presents evidence from my seven models that are both consistent and inconsistent with my expectations. I observe that my estimated coefficients for hypothesis I are, in fact, significant under all regressions. The first model suggests that increasing the socioeconomic level by one unit reduces the probability of being offered a bribe in return for a vote by 3.2%. Additionally, model 3 suggests that strength of political ideology is significant with vote buying. Voters with stronger political preferences have an increased probability of having their vote bought by 9.3%, a finding I did not expect. A possible explanation for this is that voters with strong political alignments are usually registered with their party and are readily available on registration lists for those employing the vote buying to use.

Table 2 also shows that although there is a positive relationship with political violence and strength of political preferences in the electoral violence models, it is insignificant. In other words, while my predictions are correct in determining the coefficient is positive, it is not a precise estimate. Additionally, it appears that voters with higher incomes are unlikely to be targeted with violence, although this too is not precisely estimated. One potential reason for this is that these voters have the resources to pay for their own protection. All in all, there is some support for HIII, as it has not entirely been disproven.

Lastly, my models estimate unexpected findings amongst my controls. The most noteworthy of these is for my control on education. Under all models, my findings are significant for this control variable. For vote buying, I observe that increasing education by one unit increased the probability of the voter having his or her vote bought by 1.0%. For political violence, I observe that increasing education by one unit increased the probability of electoral violence by .3%. Although unexpected, this is an incredibly relevant and noteworthy finding. One possible explanation for this estimate is that more educated voters also tend to have stronger political alignment, and thus, may be subject to electoral violence. If this is true, then it is possible that controlling for education could have an effect for my findings on both HI and HII, therefore making them inaccurate.

Concluding Remarks:

There are several limitations that may affect my study. First, it is possible that the dataset used for my results includes inaccurate reporting. Although the dataset is varied and strong, some of the questions are also vague. Many of my explanatory variables are opinion based and could result in inaccurate reporting, such as the question that asks voters to rate themselves on a scale of political alignment. Moreover, there is the possibility of deliberate misreporting due to fear on behalf of the voter that a government official might discover that he or she admitted to having their vote bought or being victim of electoral violence. The voter may fear getting caught and losing what he or she had gained in return for his or her vote or the electoral violence could get worse. This potential fear can help explain the low level of observations under the electoral violence variable that had a .028 mean of observation. In addition, there is potential for misreporting amongst my explanatory variables, as it is possible that wealthier and/or

more educated voters will be more likely to report incidents of manipulation. Lastly, although Colombia is an interesting case for the reasons mentioned at the beginning of this study, the fact that there are so many additional non-stable parties does not necessarily translate into strong partisan attachments. This might make it harder to find evidence in favor of hypothesis II.

This paper offers the first analytical look into how social, economic, and political characteristics of a voter can be used to predict what form of fraud could be most likely to occur on a specific voter. This, I believe, is extremely useful for the study of electoral fraud in democracies. Even in countries with robust elections like those in Colombia, elections can still be undermined by electoral manipulation. The question is how can electoral manipulation continue in countries like Colombia that have long histories of democracy? Moreover, what are the characteristics of voters that make them more vulnerable to certain types of manipulation, i.e. vote buying versus electoral violence? Though not always in ways predicted, this study has successfully shown that specific voter characteristics can be linked with some forms of manipulation.

This study can also explain the relationships of my explanatory variables to other forms of manipulation. As stated, electoral violence and vote buying are not mutually exclusive forms of manipulation. This means that there are other forms of electoral manipulation that political parties also choose to employ on voters. In practice, this study can apply to other forms of manipulation, such as ballot stuffing or inaccessibility to the voting polls. With continued research, the expectation is that voter demographics will more regularly be understood as determinants for all forms of electoral manipulation that can be studied.

The main empirical finding is that the correlation between vote buying and socioeconomic class is irrefutable. This is not to say that voters with high socioeconomic levels are less likely to be manipulated, but rather that they are having their votes manipulated through other means such as electoral violence. This demonstrates that more than one form of manipulation is clearly at play. It is important that the field of Political Science continue studying how to link these different tactics with specific voter characteristics. This is an aspect of Political Science that I believe has vastly lacked in sufficient exploration. With continued work, electoral fraud will be better conceptualized and it will become easier to understand how political parties choose between electoral manipulation methods.

There are two main implications to be drawn from my findings. First, Colombia's history with democracy has long been regarded as the Latin American exception, illuminating this country as admirable in a region long dominated by military dictatorships and coups. I argue that such a crowning is misconstrued. It overlooks the fragility of Colombia's democratic institutions and the magnitude of fraud that cannot and should not be underestimated. Therefore, while Colombia is privileged from having avoided a strenuous struggle towards democracy, true democracy has failed to flourish due to pervasive electoral fraud.

Secondly, the implications for the process of democratization are vast. At its core, the process of democratization was established on the principle of moving from authoritarian regimes to democracies. However, as democratization has become the norm, authoritarian political parties and regimes have found other ways to manifest manipulation including, but not limited to, vote buying and electoral violence. Electoral

manipulation is in many ways the result of a failing democracy. These forms of fraud delegitimize the process of democratization, making it more difficult for democratic institutions to survive. Political scientists play an effective role in influencing the agents of change to make policy reforms that reduce the prevalence of electoral manipulation. It is because of this that the field of Political Science must begin to move past simply promoting the adoption of democracy, and begin to transition towards encouraging democratic systems to be adopted carefully and systematically in order to better avoid electoral manipulation.

In sum, this paper attempts to examine the relationship between different forms of electoral fraud (vote buying and electoral violence) in democracies and specific voter characteristics, in this case socioeconomic levels and strength of political ideology. In this examination, I specifically sought to demonstrate that such factors could be catalysts for electoral fraud. Such an investigation was especially important for understanding how despite democratic institutions, political parties are still able to impact a country's electoral process in a negative manner. Given Colombia's paradoxical joint history of democracy and electoral instability, I sought to explain the relationship between my dependent and explanatory variables using rich and varied data from this country.

Electoral fraud is an effective mechanism for subverting the formal process of democratic institutions, and can be found in illiberal democracies across the globe. Thus, the implications of my study are vast, have external validity, and will impact future research. It is likely that this theory will hold in countries similar to Colombia such as Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Thailand, and the Philippines. Other studies on electoral fraud have simply focused on the correlation between electoral fraud and determinants

such as socioeconomic status.⁵⁵ This study, however, takes an in depth look into the calculation behind choosing types of electoral manipulation like vote buying and electoral violence, not just the determinants of one. My findings give me confidence that there are other variables that are associated with particular kinds of electoral fraud. By focusing on a similar method, and adding to the literature with similar studies, there is a clear opportunity in which we can better understand how electoral manipulation is possible under democratic institutions. It is imperative that future literature continues to examine mechanisms by which political parties choose forms of manipulation. Such examinations are important to strengthening the process of democratization. With this, we are one step closer to strengthening global democracy and understanding the multidimensionality of electoral fraud.

⁵⁵ Ziblatt, Daniel. 2009. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." *American Political Science Review* 103.01.

Appendix

1. **COLESTSOC:** Socioeconomic Strata
Circle one of the following: 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. **Q1:** Gender:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

3. **AREANAC:** Were you born in an urban area or rural?

Urban 1
 Rural2
 NS.....88
 NR.....98

4. **CLIEN1:** In the last four years and keeping electoral campaigns in mind. Has a candidate or someone from a political party offered you something, like a favor, food, or any other item or benefit in return for your vote or support for that candidate or party? Has this happened frequently, rarely, or never?

5. **COLVB25A:** Have you ever been pressured with threats to vote in favor of a particular candidate or party?

6. **AGER:** Which age range do you fall in?
 - a. 18 – 27
 - b. 28 – 40
 - c. 41 or older

7. **VB11:** Which political party do you strongly sympathize with?

(801) Partido Liberal
 (802) Partido Conservador
 (803) Polo Democrático Alternativo
 (804) Partido de la U (Partido Social de Unidad Nacional)
 (805) Cambio Radical
 (806) Convergencia Ciudadana
 (808) Colombia Democrática
 (809) Colombia Viva
 (810) Movimiento MIRA
 (817) Alianza Social Indígena (ASI)
 (819) Movimiento Alianza Social Afrocolombiana (ASA)
 (821) Partido Verde
 (822) Partido de Integración Social (PAIS)
 (823) Partido de Integración Nacional (PIN)

- (826) Movimiento Afrovides –La Esperanza de un Pueblo
 (827) Movimiento Interétnico de Opción Participativa “Mio”
 (77) Otro
 (88) NS
 (98) NR
 (99) INAP

8. **ED:** What was the last year of education you completed or passed? _____ year of _____ (elementary, high school, university, past university level) = _____ total number of years (use the table below to calculate)

	1 ^o	2 ^o	3 ^o	4 ^o	5 ^o	6 ^o	7 ^o
Ninguno	0						
Primaria	1	2	3	4	5		
Secundaria	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Universitaria	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Superior no universitaria	12	13	14	15			
NS	88						
NR	98						

9. **LI:** Changing topics now, on this page we have a scale from 1 to 10 that goes from left to right, where 1 symbolizes left and 10 symbolizes right. In this day in age, a lot of people talk about those that sympathize best with the left and those with the right. Following the definitions that you have of the terms “leftist: and “rightist:’ when you think about your political point of view, where do you find yourself on the scale? Give me a number:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	NS 88	NR 98
Izquierda										Derecha	

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